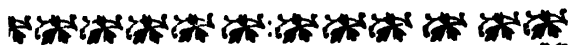


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REPORTS ON  
THE INDIAN  
GENERAL ELECTIONS  
1951-52

EDITED BY  
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*Published under the auspices of the Indian Political  
Science Association*

POPULAR BOOK DEPOT BOMBAY

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# PREFACE

The Indian general elections of 1951-52 were the first to be held on the basis of adult franchise in this country. To students of political science they offered a unique opportunity to observe the working of the electoral process and the interplay of political forces which were involved. The setting of the elections was characterised at once by the illiteracy of most of the 173 million voters and the inexperience of the administration in handling the electoral machinery over the vast area of a subcontinent. The multitude of facts, opinions, attitudes and aspirations brought to the surface by the elections needed to be observed, analysed, interpreted and, where possible, evaluated objectively.

It was with this aim in view that a tentative scheme of a survey of the electoral process to be undertaken by political scientists in the different states of India was drawn up and a note setting out the various facets of the study was circulated by the then General Secretary of the Indian Political Science Association.<sup>1</sup> In this he was assisted and encouraged by an American political scientist then working in India,<sup>2</sup> and by senior members of the above Association and particularly by one who was already devising an intensive study of the election process in the city of Bombay.<sup>3</sup>

As was to be expected from a body of political scientists, the response to the circular was encouraging. A committee<sup>4</sup> was therefore set up to direct and co-ordinate the study and certain individuals were requested to observe and report upon the electoral process in their respective states. The latter were advised to secure the co-operation of suitable persons in their states for conducting the study. The project, conceived and followed up until then on the initiative of a few indivi-

1. Prof. S. V. Kogekar.

2. Dr. Richard L. Park.

3. Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya.

4. Consisting of Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya, Prof. D. N. Banerjee, Dr. B. B. Majumdar, Dr. A. Appadorai, Prof. T. Balakrishnan Nayar, Prof. S. V. Kogekar and Dr. Richard L. Park.

duals, was subsequently adopted by the Indian Political Science Association at its annual session held at Hyderabad in December 1951. A smaller committee<sup>5</sup> for looking after the editorial work of the project was appointed.

While the institutional requirements of the study were thus satisfactorily met, the project suffered from some major handicaps from its inception. In the first place, the time at the disposal of the organisers of the study was short and consequently the scheme could at best be an improvisation. Secondly, there was a lack of funds which could be placed at the disposal of the Central Committee or the various state reporters for essential secretarial and research assistance and for travelling expenses. Consequently, the Committee as a whole could neither meet nor maintain a central office apart from such meagre personal establishments as the two joint secretaries<sup>6</sup> could command. The resources available to the state reporters were also either non-existent or inadequate. Indeed, after setting up the committees and selecting the state reporters, when it was found that the efforts made for securing financial assistance proved unavailing doubts were raised about the feasibility of the project. Nevertheless, it was felt that the opportunity was too great to be missed and the best course was for every one concerned to do his or her best with such resources in men and money as one could command. The inevitable result of the lack of funds was that the work could be undertaken only as a spare-time occupation, the coverage was disparate as between different states and little by way of intensive field studies could be expected. But some effort was bound to be made and within the above limitations, the phenomenon was observed and recorded. This by itself was considered to be no small achievement. Indeed, if nothing else was achieved by this project, it would serve to focus intelligent attention on certain significant factors in the Indian political situation and this in itself was not altogether valueless. Considering the large quantity of material gathered and meaningfully organised in spite of the above handicaps, there

Consisting of Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya, Prof. S. V. Kogekar and Dr. Richard L. Park.  
Prof. S. V. Kogekar and Dr. Richard L. Park.

would not seem to be any reason to feel regret at the poor start or the modest outcome of this effort.

The state reports reaching the hands of the editors taken together, were, however, seen to bear out the fears expressed above. The time-limit could not be observed, the coverage showed variation from state to state, and, what was most disheartening, certain states were left uncovered on account of the inability of the reporters to fulfil their commitments. That there was little uniformity in style and that in some cases objectivity was not well maintained were only minor defects in comparison. A general and realistic picture of the election process for the country as a whole could hardly be derived from these reports. And yet some of the state reports were written with such deliberation and care and preceded by such an elaborate organisation of the study that it would have been a pity to let them blush unseen. What were the editors to do in such a predicament?

Added to the difficulties of the material were their own personal difficulties which were equally formidable. Scattered over different parts of the country, the members of the Central Committee could not meet together. The members of the small editorial committee too found themselves hard pressed for time owing to their other preoccupations. The immense task involved in the further processing of the material appeared almost beyond their reach in these circumstances. One way out was to encourage the state reporters to publish their respective reports separately. This was indeed done and some reports were so published.<sup>7</sup> But many reports were not written in a form suitable for this purpose. They would have appeared too sketchy as separate publications though they had undoubtedly some significance as part of a symposium. Nor were all reporters prepared to bring out their material in this way. In the meanwhile time was not standing still. It was announced that the Election Commission itself was compiling for publication a comprehensive report on the general elections, in addition to detailed statistics of the poll. The editors therefore hesitated to prepare for publication such version of the survey as had emerged in

7. E.g., Assam and Punjab.

terms of the reports actually received.

On a perusal of the report published in two volumes by the Election Commission,<sup>8</sup> however, it was seen that there was much material in our state reports which was not covered by the Election Commission. Nor was there any other publication which provided such material. After serious deliberation the editors were ultimately persuaded to proceed with the work of editing the reports if only in order to place the data so laboriously collected in the hands of the student of this subject. It was decided to prepare brief informative notes on the non-reported states on the basis of newspaper files and such other sources as were available to the editors. In revising their earlier attitude of hesitation, the editors have taken note of two other factors. One was the directive of the Indian Political Science Association at its annual session at Muzaffarpur requesting one of us to proceed with the publication; the other was the very widespread desire expressed by fellow workers abroad who had come to know of this study that it should be published in spite of its limitations. There is such a dearth of "realistic" data on political phenomena in India that one is loth to see such good material as the survey furnishes go unused.

The task of the editors was facilitated by two other factors. It was found possible for the American member of the team to visit India and collaborate in editing this study and help in other ways in bringing about its publication. An arrangement was also worked out by which a small grant secured from the Institute of Pacific Relations could be utilised towards the expenses involved in preparing the study for publication.

Such, in brief, is the history of this study. As published here, it includes material which can be divided into three main categories. In the first place, there are edited versions of the unpublished state reports. The editors had to abridge most of these reports for reasons of space and to rearrange the matter in some of them in order to maintain a certain uniformity in the framework into which the reports were

8. *Report on the First General Elections in India, 1951-52, Vol. I and II* By Election Commission, India—1955.

designed to be cast. Brief edited extracts from the published reports fall in the second category. In making the selection of extracts the editors were guided by the desire to bring together in this study the most distinctive local features of the election process observed by the state reporters. For greater details reference could, of course, be made to the reports published in full. Finally there are brief informative notes on the elections in states for which no reports were received. These notes have been compiled by the editors from contemporary data available to them. It is hoped that they will not only lend completeness to the publication, but shed some light on the local situation in the respective states in spite of the fact that they do not have the advantage of being based on first hand observation in the locality. The appendix gives only a few statistical tables of general interest. For complete statistical data reference must, of course, be made to Vol II of the Report of the Election Commission.

The editors need only add that the study composed under difficult circumstances is offered as a very humble contribution to the understanding of the Indian political scene as it unfolded itself during the first general elections.

## II

Perhaps it would be in order, for future guidance, to make certain observations on the nature of the preparations necessary for undertaking a cooperative study of this character. In a way these observations would be the positive side of the difficulties and handicaps by which the present study was beset from its very inception.

It seems to us that the time over which such a study requires to be spread and, incidentally, for which adequate provision of personnel and finance needs to be made should be at least a year before and a year after the actual period of the elections. During the pre-election period, apart from the organisational aspect of the work, attention has to be specially directed to the current events and problems which gain in importance as election day approaches. The political moves and attitudes of the different parties, the steps taken

to ensure popular backing, the alliances formed, the propaganda devices employed—are all matters of importance in understanding the final verdict of the electorate. An adequate coverage of these aspects will involve continuous work by a team of observers and analysts in different regions of the country. In addition to such 'extensive' work, it may be fruitful to select particular localities for more 'intensive' surveys designed to throw light on the attitudes and reactions of the voters to the activities of the party units. A very interesting study in the dynamics of the process would involve observation and inquiry in the same area at varying intervals of time until the eve of polling. Similar studies could be devised on each of the many different aspects of the election process.

A study of the elections in a vast country like India, if it is to be fully meaningful, must needs be regionally conceived. The final product will be made or marred by the extent to which the regional survey provides or fails to provide coverage and analysis. Central direction can at best provide the conceptual framework and advice on methodological problems.

At the regional level, it is essential that adequate full-time assistance should be available to the reporting individual or committee. The preoccupations of most Indian professors in connection with their teaching, examining and administrative duties places a special emphasis on the importance of such assistance. Unfortunately, there is very little recognition of the value of field work in the domain of political studies in Indian universities and colleges, and facilities necessary for such studies are not as easily forthcoming as in the well-established field of economics. The number of members in departments of political science is also too small to permit of a lightening of the teaching and administrative burdens. Yet considering the material that is available for political studies in India, it will be a pity if these difficulties could not somehow be removed.

What applies to the state surveys also holds true in respect of the work of the Central Committee. An adequate financial provision for holding periodical meetings of the Committee, trained and full-time research assistance throughout

the period of the survey, the establishment of a central secretariat to serve as a clearing house of information during the first year and to collect or collate overall statistics, and the availability of at least one senior political scientist freed from all routine teaching and administrative duties during the second year of the work—these appear to us to be the minimum conditions for the efficient and timely performance of the task involved in the presentation of the general report on the elections.

Contacts between political scientists on the one hand and politicians and administrators on the other have been very few and far between in India. Both the latter have a tendency to regard the former as either utterly useless for 'practical life' or a positive nuisance in their onerous routine. The response from the politicians to questionnaires has been uniformly discouraging. While the administrators have not failed to supply necessary information within the limits of a somewhat outworn code of public relations, there has been a general absence of recognition of the value and need of academic work in the political field. In consequence, instances of administrative heads stretching a point and enabling responsible academic workers to gain a better insight into the process from the governmental angle have been conspicuously few. There is obviously much scope for improvement in this situation.

### III

The editors are pleased to record their appreciation of the very valuable assistance they received in the preparation of this study from Shri. Gopal Krishna (now pursuing advanced studies in the University of Oxford). He bore the brunt of collecting material for the editorial notes on those states for which no reports were received and helped in many other ways also in the processing of the material. We are grateful for his assistance.

To the Institute of Pacific Relations goes the distinction of being the only research agency which was prepared to help forward the publication of this study by permitting an

arrangement for financial assistance. The editors wish to acknowledge their debt of gratitude to Mr. William L. Holland, Secretary-General of that Institute for this valuable help.

Dr. Park devoted part of the time to this project as a Fellow of the Middle East Institute (1951-52), and part as Head of the Modern India Project of the University of California at Berkeley (1956). Appreciation is expressed to both these organisations for making it possible for him to complete this work.

Though Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya did not find it possible to be associated with the editorial work in the later stages, the editors are grateful to him for his encouragement and advice throughout.

But for the energy and enterprise of Shri. Sadanand G. Bhatkal of the Popular Book Depot, the publication of this book would not have been possible even at this late stage. We are grateful to him for the interest he has taken in this venture.

Finally the editors have to thank the Indian Political Science Association under whose auspices this study is being published for giving them the opportunity to be associated with this work.

To the many individuals who helped in the collection and analysis of data in the different states a word of apology should perhaps take the place of an acknowledgement of thanks. The reasons for the long delay in the publication of this study have been explained earlier in this note. But an explanation can never be an adequate excuse for a lapse—and a lapse it has been from the point of view of the individual reporters and their colleagues. Apologies may also be in order for what might be regarded as a ruthless mutilation of some of the state reports. But reasons of space and the need to maintain a uniform framework of presentation left no alternative. However, for all such lapses on their part the editors crave the indulgence of their fraternal colleagues.

S. V. KOG EKAR  
RICHARD L. PARK



*POSTSCRIPT*

Taking advantage of my absence in America of my colleague, I have allowed myself the liberty of adding the following words both in order to complete the record and as an acknowledgement of a personal debt:

The grant of financial assistance to which a reference has been made earlier was given personally to Dr. Park by the Institute of Pacific Relations, New York City, for a study of the general elections in India. It was not available to the Indian Political Science Association as such. Dr. Park generously made it over towards the expenses of much of the editorial work involved in the preparation of this publication.

For reasons already mentioned, I had almost given up hope of being able to bring out this publication. It was however the persuasive logic and forward-looking intellectual outlook of Dr. Park which was finally effective in reviving that hope. For such merit as this volume may have, thanks are due to the patience, under great provocation, with which Dr. Park argued his case.

S. V. KOGEKAR



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# STATE REPORTS

## NOTE

Almost all the State Reports were completed by the end of 1952. In view of their utility and importance as a contemporary record of events, the editors have refrained from bringing them up-to-date by making material changes in the text. The data given at the beginning of each report have been compiled from the Census Report of 1951, and from Vol. II of the Election Commission's *Report on the First General Elections in India*. It may be noted, however, that the figures in the body of the State Reports are based on contemporary estimates and therefore differ in many cases from those given by the editors.





# I ASSAM

V. VENKATA RAO  
Gauhati University

*Area: 85,012 sq. miles*

*Population: 90,43,707*

*Electorate: 41,41,720*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	12	108
Constituencies .. ..	10	94
Uncontested seats ..	—	3
Contesting candidates ..	40	455
Valid votes polled ..	26,47,127	24,48,890
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..	47.7	49.6

## INTRODUCTORY

Assam became a British protectorate after the First Burmese war in 1826. In 1832, Cachar was annexed. In 1835, Jaintia Hills were included in the East India Co.'s dominions and in 1839, Upper Assam was annexed to the Province of Bengal. In 1874, Assam was separated from Bengal and placed under the administrative control of a Chief

The writer desires to express his gratefulness to Shri. R. R. Khaund, the Chief Electoral Officer, Assam, Shri. Bimala Prosad Chaliha, President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, Principal Hem Barua, Chairman of the Assam Socialist Party, for giving access to records available in their respective offices and for discussing with them certain controversial issues relating to General Elections in this state.

The full report has been published under the title "General Elections in Assam, 1952" in the *Journal of the University of Gauhati*, 1953, pp. 133-168.

Commissioner. In 1905, a large portion of Bengal was added to the Province of Assam and a new province styled as East Bengal and Assam was created and placed under a Lieutenant Governor. There was a widespread popular agitation against this measure and although it was then pronounced as a settled fact, it was unsettled in 1912 when the old Province of Assam was reconstituted. A further change took place in 1947, when Sylhet went over to Eastern Pakistan.

Geographically, Assam occupies a strategic position. It is bounded on all the four sides by foreign countries, Tibet, China, Burma and Eastern Pakistan. It is connected with the rest of India by a stretch of land fifty miles in length.

## PARTIES

The number of parties that contested the general elections was 20 including the All India parties.<sup>1</sup> Besides the Congress, Socialists, Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, Communists, Hindu Mahasabha, Jan Sangh, Forward Bloc, Bolshevik Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Party, there were the local parties like All Peoples' Party, Tribal League, Tribal Sangh, United Mizo Freedom Organization, Khasi Jaintia Rural Organization, Khasi Jaintia National Federated State Conference, Garo National Conference and the Hill Peoples' Party. Inevitably, of course, there were the Independents.

The 12 seats of the House of the People were contested by some of the All India parties and by four local parties: All Peoples' Party, The Tribal Sangha, Khasi Jaintia Darbar and the Hill Peoples' Party. But elections to the Legislative Assembly were contested by all the aforementioned 20 parties.

Of the local parties, the most important were the Garo National Council, the Naga National Council, the Mizo Union and the Sarbadal. The first was led by Captain Sangama.

1. In 1937, there were three parties contesting elections. In 1946, there were 10 parties, the Congress, Tribal league, Koch Community, Nath Community, Hindu Mahasabha, Communist, Muslim League, Jamiat-ul-Ulema, Muslim Parliamentary Board and the Krishak Praja Party.

It promised to provide good roads, efficient medical relief and protection of the Garo language. The second was led by M. Phizo. It demanded the establishment of an independent sovereign state comprising the territories occupied by the Nagas. The Mizo Union led by R. Thanhlira and the United Mizo Freedom Organization led by R. Lalnawala promised beneficent administration if returned to power. The one point on which the Mizo Union and the United Mizo Freedom Organization differed was about the "Lals". The Mizo Union promised the abolition of Lals. But the U.M.F.O. did not consider the Lals as an obstacle to progressive administration.

In addition to these parties another party, The United Progressive Front, came into existence as a result of an electoral alliance. The Front did not survive long. The programme of the Front included the formation of linguistic provinces, complete autonomy and regional Governments for the tribal areas; equal rights for all citizens, equal pay irrespective of sex, and finally the right of recall.

## SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

All the political parties adopted a particular procedure for the selection of candidates. In the first place, applications were invited from prospective candidates. Each candidate was required to give certain personal details such as age, educational qualifications, occupation, public service rendered and parliamentary experience. Applications were to be submitted to the prescribed authority before the prescribed date together with the prescribed fee. The amount of fee fixed differed from party to party. The Congress, for example, fixed the fees at Rs. 100 irrespective of the constituency. The Socialist Party fixed it at Rs. 20.

The applications reveal interesting details. They tell us of the services which the candidates had rendered for the

2. The "Lals" are the hereditary chiefs who exercise a great deal of authority. They occupy a recognized position in the social organization and exercise both civil and criminal jurisdiction.

cause of Independence,<sup>3</sup> the sacrifices made and the personal risks taken or faced,<sup>4</sup> the heroic deeds performed during the Civil Disobedience Movement,<sup>5</sup> the part played in the freedom struggle,<sup>6</sup> and the interest evinced in social service.<sup>7</sup>

Each Congress candidate was required to sign a pledge that he would abide by the decision of the party and would remain faithful to it.<sup>8</sup>

3. For example, application of Rev. Nichols Roy—Shillong constituency. The Reverend says: "I am a preacher of Righteousness and Temperance. . . . I moved a resolution in the Legislative Council to register all opium consumers in Assam. . . . I worked for temperance. I was the author of three Acts. . . . I fought against independence movement in the Hills for separating the Hill districts from Assam. . . . When I was in the United States, I had occasion to speak of the independence of India in the American Clubs . . ."

4. For example, application of Moulana Abdul Jalil. The Moulana says: "I am a selfless worker of the Council of Nationalist Muslims. I was brutally oppressed on the Direct Action Day of the Muslim League in 1946 at Noasark Muszid, Sylhet. Four times my life was endangered with serious plots against me."

5. For example, application of Sriman Prafulla Goswami—Nalbari constituency. Shri Goswami says: "When I was Secretary to the Cotton College Union, Pandit Nehru, the then President of the Congress was received in the college compound and presented with an address in an organised meeting. This was the first incident of the kind throughout India to receive the Congress President in a Government College which created a sensation throughout the Province . . . I was expelled by the Cotton College authorities . . . for my political work."

6. For example, application of Bishnu Ram Medhi—Hajo constituency. Shri Medhi says: "Continuously served as a humble soldier in connection with freedom movement."

7. For example, application of Usha Barthakur. Shrimati Usha says: "I am the only individual in Assam who put forth concrete suggestions during the Primary Education Bill while on the anvil of the legislature. . . . Received high commendations both from the public and late Bardaloi."

8. The pledge was as follows:

"I am a member of the Indian National Congress..

I offer myself for selection to the Assam Legislative Assembly for the constituency of . . . .

If I am not accepted as a Congress candidate I hereby undertake not to stand independently or on any other party ticket against a candidate put forward by the Congress.

On my being accepted as a Congress candidate for the said or any other constituency I hereby undertake to conduct election campaign in accordance with the instructions issued by the Congress Committee.

I further declare that I will follow the principles and policy laid down by the Congress or by any competent authority on its behalf and will conform to the rules and directions issued from time to time as well as to the instructions issued for the guidance of the members in the State Assembly.

I also undertake to resign my seat whenever I am called upon to do so by a competent Congress Authority."

The Congress party received a greater number of applications than any other party: 345 for the Legislative Assembly and 33 for the House of the People seats.

After the receipt of applications, they were referred to the District Committees for their opinion. The Socialist party was further required to consult the Kisan Panchayat or Trade Union affiliated to the party existing in the constituency before recommending a candidate to the Central Parliamentary Committee. The Provincial Committees constituted special committees for the selection of candidates. The Congress Selection Committee consisted of nine members,<sup>9</sup> and that of the Socialist Party five.

The Provincial Committees were required to observe certain principles in the selection of candidates. They were, for instance, integrity, merit, adequate representation to the minorities and women.

The peculiarity in this state was that the candidates were required to appear before the selection committee for an interview at their own expense.

The Congress Committee selected 81 candidates for the Legislative Assembly and 10 for the House of the People and referred 14 complicated cases to the Central Committee for final decision. The Socialist party selected 68 candidates for the Assembly and 10 for the House of the People.

At the time of selection of candidates various kinds of pressures were brought to bear on the selection committees. Meetings were held, demonstrations were staged and telegrams were despatched in favour of or against the candidates who had applied for a party ticket.<sup>10</sup> The extent to

9. Circular letter of the Socialist Party of India No. PB.92/950-51 dated 13-8-1951.

10. I have selected a few of the telegrams for study. The following telegrams were received from the Shillong constituency.

- (i) "Nepali community will never support a tribal";
- (ii) "Shillong public wants Rev. Nichols Roy";
- (iii) "It will be an outrage if a Khasi is given preference";
- (iv) "Bengali voters will never vote for a tribal from the Shillong Constituency which is clearly meant for non-tribal by the Delimitation Committee".

For Digboi constituency the following telegrams were received:

- (i) "Pray give nomination Dalbir Singh Lohar for Digboi constituency—public demands it";

which these methods had influenced the committees, it is very difficult to say. To my mind it appears that they played little or no part. If telegrams and representations are to be taken as the indices of public mind then several persons would not have been selected.<sup>11</sup>

What were the considerations that weighed with the selection committees in preferring A to B? A perusal of the records available in the offices of the political parties reveals the fact that the selection committees had constantly in mind the chances of success of the candidates concerned.<sup>12</sup>

ii) "All-Assam Sikh association recommends Dalbir Singh";

iii) "Labour Digboi constituency demand seat for Dalbir Singh. Otherwise it will hurt labour very deeply";

iv) "Nomination to Lohar means justice";

v) "To neglect Dalbir Singh is very ominous."

Another telegram says: "All the workers are alarmed at the reported withdrawal of Bhagavati and Omeo Das. They should be recommended and returned at all costs if success in election is desired."

The Asom Jatiya Mahasabha represented about a particular candidate as follows: "In my opinion he is an ambitious and intriguing gentleman. Consideration should be taken into account in recommending candidates who might not be suspected of being allied with . . . in any sort of intrigue against Assamese interests."

11. For or against the candidacy of the Rev. Nichols Roy—Shillong constituency—33 telegrams and 20 petitions were submitted. If the number of petitions or telegrams had received serious consideration of the Selection Committee then the Reverend would not have been selected.

12. To illustrate, a few extracts from the remarks of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee on some of the applications are given below:

(i) L.B.—Kalibar constituency: "He is a good Congress-worker, and a man of integrity. He has extensive personal influence in the constituency and his chances of success are sure. In the opinion of the DCC no one except him will be able to defeat the rival Socialist candidate."

(ii). D. S.—Digboi constituency: "A sitting M.L.A. He is an influential Nepali leader. He has organized labour under the I.N.T. U.C. . . . A section of Congressmen doubt his integrity."

(iii). B.—Satia constituency: "He is one of the prominent Congress leaders of the state, popularly known (all) over the province. His integrity is beyond question. He has best chance of success."

(iv). B.R.M.—Hajo constituency: "He is a prominent Congress leader since 1921. He was President of the APCC for nine years in the most trying time."

(v). G.C.G.—Gahpur constituency: "He is an ardent believer in the constructive programme of Gandhiji. His integrity is good and has best chance of success."

(vi). A.M.M.—Hailakandi constituency: "He is an old Congressman and was the only Muslim candidate returned on Congress ticket defeating the rival League candidate. He is one of the Ministers. He is a man of integrity."

As a consequence, such factors as integrity received secondary consideration. If integrity had been insisted upon some of the candidates should not have been selected. It is true no doubt that such factors as popularity, service to the country, and the party, belief in Gandhism, minority interests and the interests of labour received due consideration. Generally veterans were preferred. And those that had helped the Congress in its dark days were not forgotten. Sometimes a seat was given to a particular person, although he was a dark horse, to placate a particular community, or as a gift to the son, daughter or widow of a prominent Congressman.

The provincial committees submitted their recommendations to the central committees for final approval. The recommendations contained full particulars of each candidate. Further they were also required to give reasons why A was preferred to B.<sup>13</sup> The Congress party made provision for an appeal against the decision of the committees.

The Provincial lists were scrutinized by the central committees of the respective parties. So far as the Congress was concerned there were two committees: the Central Parliamentary Committee and the Screening Committee.

While scrutinizing the provincial lists, the central committees of the respective parties applied their own tests for the final selection of candidates. But this much is a fact that the central committees, like their provincial counterparts, were guided by a single thought, viz. success in elections. The central committees allowed several appeals and set aside the decision of the provincial committees. For instance the Central Parliamentary Committee of the Congress

(vii). C. K.—Golaghat constituency: "He is a sitting M.L.A. He himself belongs to the labour class. . . . Although the DCC did not recommend him the PCC consider it advisable to put him for the constituency in the interests of labour."

(viii). M. H.—Nowgong Raha constituency: "He is a veteran Congressman—political sufferer. His integrity is unquestionable and he has best chance of success."

(ix). H. H. C.—Dhom Dhoma constituency: "He is an influential rich man of the locality. He helped the Congress throughout."

(x). M. I.—Rupohitat constituency: "He comes of an immigrant family. He is popular in the constituency which is overwhelmingly inhabited by the immigrant Muslims."

13. Circular letter of the Socialist Party of India—PB.92|1950 dated 13-8-1951.

allowed as many as 17 appeals from this state. But the most distressing aspect was that there was a lot of mudslinging by the disappointed candidates. A study of the list of candidates selected by the Central Parliamentary Committee of the Congress reveals the fact that in spite of the Congress President's precepts, the dominant note that seemed to have prevailed in the choice of candidates was a palpable desire to accommodate sub-communal claims and make sure that elections were won.

In regard to the selection of Congress candidates, there was an interesting controversy, between the former Chief Minister, Mr. Saadulla and the Provincial Congress Committee. Mr. Saadulla was a prominent member of the Muslim League prior to partition. After partition he joined the Congress and was co-opted as an extra-ordinary member of the committee for the selection of Congress candidates. The Provincial Congress Committee selected 19 Muslims and submitted the list to the Central Committee for ratification. But the Central Committee eliminated 10 candidates on the ground that they were either communal minded, disloyal to the State or were involved in corrupt practices. In their place it selected some other Muslim candidates and some of them were those who had not applied for a Congress ticket. Further, Mr. Saadulla had applied for a seat in the Legislative Assembly. But the Central Committee offered him a Parliamentary seat. Saadulla protested and resigned from the Congress and accused it of having adopted an unfair attitude towards the Muslims. His contention was that on the basis of population, the Muslims were entitled to 20 seats but were given 17 seats only.

These accusations were denied by a joint statement issued by the President of the Provincial Congress Committee and the Chief Minister of the State. The statement contended that on the basis of population the Muslims were entitled to 15 seats (20 per cent of the general seats) but the Congress was generous enough in giving 17; that in the scrutiny of the provincial lists the Central Committees were assisted by an eminent Muslim lawyer of the state; that the Central Committee consisted of two eminent Muslims, Maulana Azad



and Rafi Ahamad Kidwai; that all the applicants were given adequate opportunities to make representation before the Central Committee; and that the Central Committee selected persons with a long history of sacrifice behind them. The statement admitted that the Central Committee offered a ticket to a person who did not apply before. But it said that the person selected was an "eminent Muslim" and he was allotted a seat in a constituency where there were 590 Muslims only, out of a total voting population of 42,000. Finally the statement concluded by saying that in the selection of candidates the committee was guided by such factors as "ability of the candidates to carry the electorate with them, integrity, merit, popularity, non-communal outlook, belief in the Congress principles and ideology, chances of success in elections and actual contact with the masses."

## ELECTORAL ALLIANCES

Excepting the Congress<sup>14</sup> all other parties had entered into electoral alliances. The main purpose of these alliances appeared to be to defeat the Congress. The first of the kind was the United Progressive Front formed by the Forward Bloc, Communist Party, Bolshevik Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. This was a province-wise electoral alliance. But there were district-wise electoral alliances also. For instance, the Cachar District Communist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party had entered into an electoral alliance and as a consequence, the Communist Party had withdrawn its candidates and supported the candidates set up by the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in the Hailakandi and Karimganj constituencies. The Communist Party entered into a similar alliance with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in Dibrugarh and as a consequence, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party supported the Communist candidates in the Dibrugarh East constituency and the Communists supported the Kisan Maz-

14. The Congress entered into an agreement with the Ahom Sabha, according to which four members of the Sabha were adopted as Congress candidates. But the agreement was not acceptable to the Sabha as a whole. As a consequence the Sabha split into two organizations.

door Praja Party candidates in other constituencies.

But the most notable electoral alliance was attempted by the Socialist Party. The National Executive of the Socialist Party, at its Ranchi session, resolved that there should not be any electoral alliance or arrangement with the Communists, Communalists, and the Congress. But with regard to the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Socialist Party was of opinion that with the formation of the Praja Party the Congress had been weakened and therefore, their attitude towards them should not be aggressive. But the question of electoral alliance was left to the discretion of the state committees. The latter were, however, requested to refer the matter to the Parliamentary Board before arriving at any final decision. They were also directed to attempt an electoral alliance with the Backward Classes and the Scheduled Tribes. They were also instructed to support Independent candidates where the party had no candidate of its own, provided they were men of integrity and sympathetically disposed towards the Party. It was not necessary that the candidate should be a Socialist.

In accordance with these instructions, the Socialist Party of Assam tried to enter into an electoral alliance with the Forward Bloc (Ruikar Group). But it was found that the latter was trying to build up its strength at the expense of the former. Therefore, the negotiations failed. A second attempt was made with the Praja Party (Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party). The Socialist Party was aware of the fact that the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party would not be able to render any effective assistance to it in winning the elections. But it recognized the fact that alliance with it had a serious negative value. It was feared that the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party would split up votes in several constituencies and thereby bring about the defeat of the Socialist candidates. It was also feared that if no alliance was entered into with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, it might join hands with the Communists. But it was discovered, in the course of negotiations, that the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party was demanding more seats than it deserved. And the negotiations broke down on the issue of the Gauhati seat. A third attempt was made

and this time it was successful. After a series of negotiations with the Assam Tribal Sangh, an electoral alliance was entered into. The terms of the agreement were as follows:

1. To conduct and control the general elections jointly.
2. To give full support to the candidates of either party.
3. In case the Socialist Party comes to power a Board of Tribal Affairs should be constituted.
4. There should be a United Assembly Party consisting of elected members.
5. The Tribal members of the Assembly should form the Advisory Committee to advise the Party on Tribal matters.
6. At least one Tribal Minister with Tribal portfolio in case the Socialist Party forms Government.
7. In case the Republican constitution is amended, revised or a new constitution is brought into being, the present provisions and safeguards for the Tribal people should be retained.
8. After 10 years, the opinion of the Tribal Sangha on these safeguards should be obtained.
9. The basis of selection of candidates to contest general elections should be the principle of acceptability to the voters.

## THE CAMPAIGN

What were the main features of the campaign? The campaign was a quiet one. Practically there were no hecklers. Meetings were serious and masses present patient. For the quietness of the campaign, the leaders of the parties deserved credit. They instructed their agents not to indulge in personal attack and recriminatory talk. The electorate, on the whole, was sober and not wildly demonstrative. This was the first feature. The second feature was that despite the fact that election meetings were well attended, only a minority of the voters came to listen to the candidates or were much influenced by the campaign itself. Most of the younger voters would have voted as their fathers did or, in the case of married women, as their husbands told them from

pique and prejudice, or as a result of sober reflection over many years. Thirdly, since 1947, by many a lesson in elementary economics from press, radio and conversation, a more or less educated electorate had been compelled to examine earnestly the political issues. So, to an extent the voters, particularly the urban voters, were sometimes more aware of the issues than the candidates themselves. Fourthly, the Congress which was hitherto in the opposition, was in office. Naturally, it had to justify its past record and defend rather than attack. They were concerned with the use of statistics and crusading with statistics as a weapon was not an easy task. So there was argument rather than passion, statement rather than challenge. Finally, although the candidates were doctrinally sound, one looked in vain for a Patel or a Gandhi to embody and illumine the creed with apostolic fervour. All these factors no doubt gave substance to the campaign but deprived it of excitement and fire.

The timing of the election was not popular. The elections were held during the harvest season and as a consequence canvassing had to be done during the night time.

## THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

Here, it would be best to give the number and nature of the local newspapers. There are two dailies, the **Assam Tribune** printed in English and the **Natun Assamiya** printed in Assamese. These two papers claim to be independent and not leaning towards any party. How far is this claim admissible? There are three ways by which the sympathies of any newspaper may be detected. Firstly, editorial comment; secondly, featuring of news, and finally, the amount of space allotted. As regards the **Natun Assamiya** the writer cannot say definitely on which side it leans since it is printed in a language which he cannot read or understand. He had therefore to depend on the spoken word. He discussed this question with the editor of the paper and the principal leaders of the political parties. The opinions expressed are contradictory and conflicting. The editor of the paper says that it is independent and points out to the nature and extent of its

unpopularity among the political parties. The Secretary of the Congress party says that it is a leftist paper. The Communists assert that it is hostile to the Communist Party. The Chairman of the Socialist Party contends that its sympathies are towards the Congress. In support of his contention he points out to the composition of the Directorate of the paper. The President of the Congress Committee is probably nearer the truth when he informed the writer that "the editor of the paper is a man with progressive views and judges every issue on its merits." But the intriguing situation is that it devotes a good deal of space to the Congress Party.

As regards the **Assam Tribune**, it is definite that its sympathies are towards the Congress. It is true that it adopted a neutral attitude at the time when a by-election was held to fill up the vacancy caused by the death of Gopinath Bardaloi. It is also true that on one occasion it suggested editorially that the member of the Communist Party who was under detention but who filed his nomination paper for a seat in the Assembly might be released. But the fact was that it changed its attitude just before the general elections and decided to support the Congress candidates. Its enthusiasm to support the Congress was so great that it injured the interest of the Congress unwittingly.

Besides these two dailies there were a number of weeklies. The **Mizo** and the **Mizo Rsi** published in the autonomous Lushai Hills District supported the Mizo Union. The **Zoran Thrupuan** was the official organ of the United Mizo Freedom Organisation. Besides these weeklies there are others like the **Assamiya**, **Congress**, **Janambhumi**, **Shillong Times**, **Democratic Review**, **Assam Sevak** and **Janata**. Excepting the last one, all other weeklies supported the Congress. Frankly speaking, most of these weeklies exercised little or no influence.

## WERE THE ELECTIONS FREE?

The question whether elections were free needs examination. Some critics were inclined to doubt this. But Mr. Khaund, the Chief Electoral Officer of the Assam

Government, asserted that they were. The Socialists and the Communists on the other hand contended that they were not. The reasons were perhaps explicable. They were defeated almost everywhere and a good number of their candidates lost their deposits. And defeat particularly in elections is always a bitter pill to swallow. Both the parties contended that the tea garden labour vote was "a closed affair," thereby meaning that the leftist parties were not given an opportunity to have access to the tea garden labour; that a great majority of the managers of the tea estates, both Indian and European, intimidated the voters to vote for the Congress; and that in this process they were assisted by the Labour Welfare Officer. The Congress Chief, Bimala Prosad Chaliha, refuted these allegations by saying that 95 per cent. of the tea garden labourers were members of the I.N.T.U.C.; that the I.N.T.U.C. had resolved to support the Congress in the General Elections; and that in accordance with the instructions received from their central office the tea garden labour voted for the Congress.

The second accusation was that the Congress abused its official authority and resorted to several malpractices. But when questioned why an election petition was not filed by the defeated party candidate, the Socialist Party Chief replied that the Socialist Party candidate was not financially strong to undertake the business.

The third accusation was that the Congress abused its official position and threatened the minorities, particularly the Muslims. It was said that the Congress Ministers, particularly the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister, threatened the Muslims that should they fail to vote for the Congress, their lot would be hard. But both the ministers denied this allegation.

Finally, there was a whispering campaign that the Government appointed persons whose sympathies were towards the Congress as Presiding Officers and Polling Officers.

The writer tried to get at the truth of these allegations. But he must confess that the evidence at his disposal was not conclusive to prove any one of the above allegations. Almost all his colleagues were appointed as Presiding Officers and a

good number of them had no soft corner for the Congress. Further, these persons were called upon to perform a mechanical function. In the presence of polling agents it was not possible to interfere with the discretion of the voters.

## MEMBERSHIP

It is interesting to know the personal details of those who were successful in the recent general elections. The statistics in this regard are not complete and in some respects they may be defective as the writer had to depend on the spoken word of several persons. Of the 117 members, including those elected to the House of the People, 1 read up to the primary standard, 3 up to the Middle School standard, 12 up to the Matriculation Class, 3 passed the Matriculation examination, 2 read up to the Intermediate in Arts (I.A.), 1 "I.A. plucked," 1 "Intermediate in Science (I.Sc.), plucked" 6 passed the I.A. or I.Sc. examination, 1 "B.A. plucked," 13 simple graduates, 1 a B.T., 31 are law graduates, 21 are Masters of Arts or Science, or holders of higher degrees in law. Thus 66 are degree holders.

As regards occupation, there is a very small number of manual workers represented among the members. It would appear to be extremely difficult in general for a worker at the bench or in the field to reach the political arena without the mediation, for a period, of a white collar job. And of all elements the legal element dominates. There are as many as 38 lawyers. As regards others, there are 8 businessmen, 7 teachers, 22 agriculturists, 2 journalists, 2 trade unionists, 1 satradhikar, 2 insurance agents, 4 mirasdars, 1 constructive worker, 1 missionary, 1 zamindar, 1 washerman, 1 owner of a printing press, and another a retired Deputy Commissioner. In the Government party there are three main groups: lawyers, businessmen and landlords. Thus predominantly and notably, the Government side of the Legislative Assembly is a representative sample of the upper class in the community.

All these 117 members have to their credit some sort of social service. Of the 117 members, as many as 41 are old

hands. Among the 41 there are many with considerable parliamentary experience. One of them at least had been a member of the Assam Assembly since 1920 without a break. It is also interesting to note the connection of the members with local administration. Of the 117 members, as many as 51 were reported to be either members or ex-members of the local authorities. A good many of them had also political experience. Forty-two of them were His Majesty's uninvited guests in the pre-Independence days! Some of them served long terms of imprisonment.

As regards the age of the members, of all the parties the Congress consists of veterans and valetudinarians. Of the 105 members of the Assembly, two are on the last lap of the psalmist's three score and ten, while 31 are below the safety belt of sixty. Seven have achieved sixty summers or more. The average age of the members, though full statistics are not available, seems to be around forty-five.<sup>15</sup>

15. The two members who have attained the age of 70 belong to the Congress party. The average age of the members of the Socialist party appears to be 40. There are seven who have attained 60 years and more; 31 are above 50 years of age; 30 above 40 years of age; 23 above 30 years of age; and 7 above 25 years of age. The information given here is incomplete.



# 2 BIHAR

B. B. MAJUMDAR  
H. D. Jain College, Arrah

*Area: 70,330 sq. miles.*  
*Population: 4,02,25,947*  
*Electorate: 1,80,80,181*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	55	330
Constituencies .. ..	44	276
Uncontested seats .. ..	1	1
Contesting candidates .. ..	197	1,593
Valid votes polled .. ..	99,91,510	95,48,840
Percentages of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..	40.5	40.6

## GENERAL

The State of Bihar is said to be one of the chief strongholds of the Congress. The Champaran satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi, the organising ability displayed by brilliant leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Abdul Bari and the spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by the rank and followers during the period of struggle for Independence have made the Congress the most powerful political organisation in the State. Socialist leaders, like Jayaprakash Narayan, Forward Bloc leaders like Shri Sheelbhadra Yajee and kisan leaders like the late Swami Sahajananda were all followers of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Communists had a few followers in the districts of Darbhanga and Monghyr. But in the other districts they

are hated as mortal enemies of society. The few young intellectuals who have accepted communism as their political faith are looked down upon as misguided cranks and eccentrics. This attitude is responsible for the total failure of the Communists in Bihar to capture even a single seat in any legislative body. In an electorate of 1,80,80,181 voters, they were able to secure 1,08,671 votes in the 24 constituencies for which they had set up candidates.

The "rightist" parties, like the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jan Sangh have practically no hold on the masses in Bihar. The only serious rival to the Congress was the Socialist Party.

A comparatively long period of holding power, without any organised opposition in or outside the legislature strengthened the position of the Congress in the country. But it was also responsible for giving rise to group rivalry within the party.

Every phase of the election, from the selection of candidates to the appointment of Ministers, was coloured by this group rivalry. The groups are said to be based mainly on caste lines, but there are some persons who do not owe allegiance to the leaders belonging to their own caste. The leader of one group is Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha, a Bhumihar Brahman, who commands the allegiance of Kayasthas; the other group is led by Dr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha, a Rajput, having allegiance with the Maithil Brahmans. Earnest efforts were made again and again to patch up the differences between these two groups, but no appreciable result followed.

Besides the Bhumihar Brahmans, popularly known as "Babhans", the Maithil Brahmans, Rajputs and Kayasthas, the Yadavas (or Gopes) whose hereditary profession is cattle-rearing form an influential section of the population of Bihar. There are many educated men, holding important positions in social and political life, among the Yadavas. They made a determined effort to come into greater prominence in the Legislature as well as in the Ministry. The intensity of group rivalry and caste feeling may be illustrated from a letter published in the "Indian Nation" on December 7, 1951, by Shri. Jamuna Prasad Sinha, who was a prominent mem-

ber of the Assembly. He is a Bhumihar Brahman, but does not belong to any particular group. Though he was nominated by the Central Election Committee of the Congress, he decided to withdraw his candidature because, as he stated, he refused to fight the election on caste lines. He writes in course of the aforementioned letter: "In my constituency, Atri (Gaya), work had begun purely on communal lines. All the Gope Congress workers have joined the Gope rival candidate. The President of the Thana Congress Committee, who is a Gope, had a hand in setting up the Gope candidate and is helping him with all the Gope Congress workers. Gopes are collecting subscription on communal lines. Similarly, all the Rajput Congress workers, helped by important Congress workers, who happen to be Rajputs, set up a Rajput candidate against me and are helping him. In these days of groupings and parties, it is difficult for any non-party Congressman to work honestly. The whole of the district is divided into Shree Babu's and Anagrah Babu's groups. I am being opposed by the lieutenants of both the groups as I do not belong to either group. The Bhumihars have told me in villages: 'You are not a Babhan but a Chamar as you are not helping Shree Babu.'" The result of the election in this particular constituency—Atri, Gaya District—showed that an Independent candidate belonging to the Yadava community was returned.

The sectional class conflicts assumed a serious proportion in Chhota-Nagpur, in general, and in the district of Manbhum in particular. The plateau of Chhota-Nagpur is inhabited by more than six million of the Scheduled Tribes, of whom the most important are the Mundas, Oraons, Ho, Bhumij and Kharia. To these are allied the Santhals who reside mainly in the Santhal Parganas, administratively a part of the Bhagalpur division. The districts of Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Singbhum, Palamau, comprising the Chhota-Nagpur division, and the Santhal Parganas constituted the Jharkhand region in the middle ages. Shri. Jaipal Singh organised the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1946 to fight the election against the Congress. He has widened the scope of this organisation with a view to include the non-aboriginal people and has

started a party called the Jharkhand Party. Its chief objective is to create a separate State consisting of the six districts referred to above. Their dissatisfaction with the Congress Government was exploited by the Jharkhand Party during the election. All who were dissatisfied with the Congress, for one reason or other, voted for the candidates set up by the Jharkhand Party. This party secured 32 seats in the State Legislative Assembly and three seats in the House of the People. Of these, 17 are Santhal, seven Oraon, three Munda, five Ho, two Ghaiyas and one Kharwar. The significance of the Chhota-Nagpur election result will be analysed below.

The occupational class conflict is reflected in the stiff fight put up by the Janata Party organised by Raja Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh (Hazaribagh) against the Congress. The Raja offered to stand as a candidate from each and every constituency from which Shri. Krishna Bullabh Sahay, the Revenue Minister of Bihar, would contest a seat. The latter is an inhabitant of Hazaribagh district and he was regarded as the spokesman of the people of Chhota-Nagpur in the last cabinet. He was (and is) in charge of Tribal Welfare. But the rivalry between the Raja of Ramgarh and the Revenue Minister was not due to any difference relating to welfare measures. The abolition of zamindari, which was sponsored by Shri. Krishna Bullabh Sahay, seems to have been responsible for the organisation of the Janata Party. The Raja of Ramgarh acquired considerable popularity by distributing to his tenants the rights over his own forests. His motive in starting this local party appears to have been to demonstrate that the sponsor of the zamindari abolition measure had no support in his own district. The Congress Central Election Committee allotted the Barkagaon Constituency to Shri Krishna Bullabh Sahay and the Giridih-cum-Dumri constituency to Shri. Jagannath Sahay. But the latter withdrew his candidature in favour of the former. Shri. Krishna Bullabh Sahay was defeated by the Raja of Ramgarh in two constituencies, including Barkagaon, but he was able to score a victory over the Raja in the Giridih-cum-Dumri constituency. The Raja of Ramgarh is the only person in India who was

returned from as many as three constituencies.

The Zamindars as a class have been hostile to the Congress. Many of them, including the proprietors of vast landed estates like Darbhanga, Dumraon, Jharia, Panchkot and Banaili have been elected to the State and Union Legislatures. They did not, for obvious reasons, appeal to the electorate on the zamindari abolition issue. Their success in the election shows the hold which the landed aristocracy still has on the masses. It may be mentioned in this connection that the Maharajadhiraj of Darbhanga was offered a seat in the House of the People by the Central Election Committee of the Congress, but he preferred to stand as an Independent candidate. He was defeated, however, by the Parliamentary Secretary of the Prime Minister in his own district. The Maharajadhiraj is not only the premier Zamindar of Bihar, but also is the hereditary leader of the Maithil Brahman community. Such a personage could be defeated only by organising all the resources of the Congress including an intensive election tour by the Congress President, Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru. The antagonism of the backward Hindu castes, including the Yadavas, may also have contributed to the defeat of the leader of the Maithil Brahman community. The Maharajadhiraj, however, was elected by the Bihar Legislative Assembly to the Council of States as an Independent candidate.

The linguistic conflict is reflected in the formation of the Lok Sevak Sangh in the Manbhum district. The contention of this party is that Bengali is the mother tongue of the majority of the people in the district and that the Congress Government in Bihar is trying to impose Hindi on them. The Government, however, show by adducing facts and figures that the language of the majority of the people is more akin to Hindi than to Bengali. The Lok Sevak Sangh was able to defeat the Congress candidates in 7 out of the 12 Assembly constituencies and in 2 out of the 4 House of the People seats.

## CANDIDATES AND PARTIES

The Congress selected for nomination almost all of the sitting members belonging to the party. Shri. Tajammul Hussain and Khwaja Inayatullah were the only two members of Parliament who were not nominated either for the House of the People or for the State Assembly. But both have been returned to the Council of States on Congress tickets. The Congress tried to enlist the services of some brilliant non-party men, like Shri. Shyamnandan Sahai and Shrimati Susama Sen (*Mrs. P. K. Sen*) for the House of the People. Similarly Shrimati Lakshmi Menon and Shri. Ramdhari Sinha (Dinkar), the great Hindi poet, were elected by the Assembly to the Council of States on Congress nominations.

There was a regular scramble for securing Congress nominations. Each of the two contending groups in the Congress tried to get its own partisans nominated. The decision of the Provincial Congress Committee was modified to a considerable extent by the Central Election Committee. It is said that of all the States, Bihar sent the largest number of Congressmen to Delhi seeking nomination approval from the Congress High Command. Nomination was given not so much on merit, or on the avowed principles of integrity and efficiency, as on the record of past service, especially the length of terms of imprisonment suffered and the influence which one had with the Congress authorities. Those who were not selected were ready to produce documentary evidence to show that the selected ones had not been sufficiently honest. Many of the rejected candidates offered themselves as Independent candidates, though they had given a solemn pledge at the time of applying for Congress nomination that they would not stand for election if their applications were rejected. But the electors in Bihar did not vote for such fickle and faithless persons. The 12 Independents who have been elected are non-party men who owe their success at the polls either to their influence with their castemen or to their social standing.

The Socialists nominated persons not so much on account of their understanding of socialist ideology and active work

for the party, as on their real chance of winning in the election against Congress candidates. As a general rule, only those candidates were set up who were prepared to defray election expenses from their own pockets. There were, however, a few exceptions.

Some of the brilliant Independent candidates like Shri. P. R. Das, the celebrated jurist, did not take any interest in their own election. The calibre of the candidates set up by the Congress and other parties may be seen from the analysis of the educational qualifications of the 336 members elected to the Bihar Legislative Assembly. All the members are able to sign their own names. No one has given his thumb impression on the Assembly Register. Of the 316 male members of the Assembly, 55 only are graduates. Of these 11 are M.A., B.L.; 17 B.L.; 7 M.A.; and 20 ordinary graduates. 25 members have passed the I.A. examination; 52 are matriculates; 72 have read up to the Secondary School Standard, but have not passed the matriculation examination; 2 are Licentiates in medicine; and the rest (110) are educationally non-descripts. Of the 14 women M.L.A.'s 4 hold M.A. degrees; 1 has passed the Intermediate Examination; 1 has passed the matriculation examination; and 3 have read upto the High School Standard.\*

## ELECTIONEERING

Important political parties like the Congress, the Socialists, Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, Jan Sangh, Jharkhand Party, Lok Sevak Sangh and the Janata Party convened numerous public meetings with a view to win over the electorate. Meetings were usually held in the open air. The meetings were usually intended for the general public, but several meetings were organised in big towns for women especially. The Socialists tried to make a special approach to the youth. In industrial and mining areas, the Socialists and the Forward Bloc held a few meetings mainly for workers. The "rightist" parties, like the Ram Rajya Pari-

\*I am grateful to the Legislative Department for supplying me with this information.

shad, Hindu Mahasabha and Ganatantra Parishad, generally met in private houses where friends and sympathisers chalked out programmes for securing votes. There was no joint meeting of parties. Speakers belonging to different political parties were seldom allowed to address meetings from the same platform. Only a few meetings displayed photos. Pictures of Nehru, J. B. Kripalani, Subhas Chandra Bose and Shyama Prasad Mookerji sometimes were exhibited by their respective followers. Loud speakers were invariably used. Singing squads were not much in evidence, but slogans were shouted by the followers of the Congress and the Socialists.

The size and composition of various audiences depended on the reputation of the speaker and chairman. Besides the active supporters of the party, usually young men and men of the street attended these meetings. Women and the intelligentsia were seldom present. The meetings lasted for about two hours. At the initial stage of the electioneering campaign in Patna, a few enthusiastic supporters of the Socialist Party tried to break up meetings organised by the Congress at the Gandhi Maidan. For such tactics they were severely condemned even by anti-Congress papers. The editorial comments in these papers had a sobering and salutary effect.

Leaflets were not distributed, but posters were used moderately. Films were exhibited by the Janata Party; a few other parties sometimes used cheap gramophone records. The adherents of the Congress and the Socialist Party took out processions when slogans were shouted. The conduct of some of the workers for certain candidates showed that they had conceived that the best way of catching votes was not to allow the electors to have any sleep in the early hours of the morning or in the late hours of night.

The Independent candidates relied mainly on their personal influence. An eminent advocate and ex-judge of the Patna High Court was an Independent candidate. He issued a statement to the Press under the caption: "Why Independent candidates should be supported". In the course of it he stated that 'there is a growing revulsion in the country against party rule;' that 'the first five years of freedom have



shown that it was a mistake to entrust the fate of this country to a party keen on compensating itself for its past sacrifices;’ that the Independents ‘will not sell their conscience to any party in the guise of party discipline.’ The astute lawyer knew that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had a very strong hold on the mind of the people of Bihar and therefore he concluded by saying: “My plea is that the Independents will provide more reliable and useful followers for leaders like Pandit Nehru or any other leader (whom the country might choose) than the present set for achieving national purposes.” The electorate in Bihar decided to define “Independent” candidates as those on whom no party could depend.

## THE PRESS

The Press, in general, supported the Congress. The group of papers owned by the Maharajadhiraj of Darbhanga was critical of the Congress programme and Congress candidates, but even these papers doubted little the eventual victory of the Congress Party in the election. The group of papers owned by the Birlas supported the Congress whole-heartedly. The Socialists and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party had no powerful backing of the Press. The few papers controlled by them mainly took a negative attitude, exploiting the weaknesses and failures of the Congress Government. The Jharkhand Party and the Janata Party did not concentrate their efforts on propaganda in the Press, because very few amongst their electorate were able to read newspapers. The Janata Party, however, devoted its efforts to propaganda through specially prepared cinema films which were exhibited free of cost in the Hazaribagh district. The Press gave full publicity to the techniques of election, and especially the corrupt practices which would disqualify a candidate.

## POLLING

On the eve of the election, I directed the students of political science reading in Arrah College to make enquiries

from 325 electors in Arrah in accordance with a previously devised questionnaire. These electors were chosen from among cultivators, shop-keepers, hawkers, rickshaw-pullers, lawyers, doctors, landlords, students and women belonging to middle class families.

The result of the investigation showed that 89 persons out of the 325 could mention the names of the Legislative Assembly and the House of the People correctly; 175 persons said that the election was being held for the Councils at Patna and Delhi; 42 persons knew only the titles of persons on whose behalf they had been approached and said that the election was being held for selecting "Vaidyaji" or "Bhagatji"; and 19 persons flatly replied that they were not interested in the election at all and were not going to vote for anybody. 212 persons said that they would vote for the Congress; 39 for the Socialist Party; 5 for the Ram Rajya Parishad; 23 for Independent candidates; 4 for the Jan Sangh and 42 declined to state for whom they were going to vote. Of the 32 women interrogated, 12 said that voting was no business for women, and 9 replied that they would vote as their men folk would direct them. Women were not very enthusiastic in exercising their franchise at Arrah, but at the Dhamar polling booth in the Arrah Sadar sub-division, 100% of the women cast their votes. The women of the mining and industrial areas, as well as those of tribal areas of Jharkhand, showed much keen interest and went to the polls in large numbers. Their civic consciousness was much greater than that of their sisters in North and South Bihar. The lack of cheap transport facilities and observance of purdah contributed to the large scale absence of women electors in these regions.

Polling took place in Bihar between January 4, 1952 and January 24, 1952. Polling facilities were adequate. There was one polling station (roughly) for every twelve hundred voters. No voter was required to go a distance of more than five miles to cast his vote. But many of the voters did not know the exact location of their polling booths or the date on which they were required to cast their votes. The polling officers were generally able and disinterested.

## ELECTION PROCEDURE ABUSES

The election was—on the whole—fair and peaceful. Re-polls had to be arranged only for about 60 booths out of a total of 19,427. Only seven cases under Section 147 I.P.C. (rioting) had to be instituted in connection with the election. The most noticeable clashes were between the Jan Sangh and the Congress at Teghra Bazar in Begusarai (Monghyr) and that between the Congress and the Socialists at Bullia Thana (Monghyr). In the Palamau district a jeep belonging to a Congress candidate was set on fire. In Patna, water and sand were poured into the petrol tank of the car of a Socialist candidate.

A candidate for the Assembly, who happened to be a Parliamentary Secretary in the last Ministry, complained in the Legislature that his defeat was due to the evil influence exercised by the Sub-Divisional Officer of the constituency from which he had contested a seat. Shri. Amin Ahmed, a former member of the Indian Civil Service and the most prominent Opposition Member in the last Assembly, accused the Congress Government of Bihar in the Assembly on 4th March 1952, "of vitiating the elections by false criminal charges against many potato merchants in Patna on the eve of the elections and added that two Ministers negotiated withdrawal of these cases to make the field clear for Congress nominees." (*Indian Nation*, Patna, March 5, 1952). On the same day, Kumar Kalika Prasad Singh (Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party) levelled wild and unsubstantial charges against the fairness of the election: "There was hardly any corrupt practice that was not freely used including distribution of money which came from public funds. State cars were used under disguise and appeals to the Election Commissioner and to the Prime Minister went unheard." (*Ibid*). In the Legislative Council, Shri. Maheshwar Prasad Narayan Singh, now a member of the Council of States, said: "There had been wide-spread tampering of ballot boxes in some constituencies in the district of Muzaffarpur and ballot papers had flown from one box to another without betraying a sign of flight. Elections in certain constituencies were most unfair." Shri.

Singh cited the instance of a certain official in the district of Muzaffarpur who allegedly was retained to help a particular candidate and he said the official had served the purpose for which he had been retained. Besides, Shri. Singh said in several cases the returning officers were most 'liberal' and careless in counting and guarding of votes." (*Indian Nation*, Patna, March 5, 1952.)

Most of these charges are unfair and motivated by party considerations. The distribution of two crores of rupees among political sufferers in the 1942 movement has lent some support to the vague charges of distribution of money for securing votes.

There was a case of selling ballot papers at Bakhtiarpur (Patna) and three persons were arrested on this charge.

## POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ELECTION

The General Election in Bihar has demonstrated that neither the leftists, like the Communists, Forward Blocists or Revolutionary Socialists, nor the rightists, like the adherents of the Hindu Mahasabha, Jan Sangh, Ram Rajya Parishad or Ganatantra Parishad had any hold on the people. The Socialists, however, may make some headway in the future provided they are able to put up an efficient party organisation. Their workers lacked experience and also financial resources. The election further revealed the strength of the mediaeval caste organisation which played a decisive role in some of the constituencies.

## LOCAL ISSUES

The most important political consequences of the election tends to be the re-orientation of the policy of the Government towards the Scheduled Tribes and possibly to the Bengali-speaking people of Manbhum district. The district of Hazaribagh, Panchi, Palamau, Manbhum, Singhbhum and the Santhal Parganas, constituting Jharkhand, are entitled to return 87 members to the State Assembly and 13 members to the House of the People. The 87 Assembly seats were

distributed as follows: the Congress and the Jharkhand Party 32 seats each, the Janata Party 11, the Lok Sevak Sangh seven, the Ganatantra Parishad one, the Forward Bloc one, the Independents two and one Independent member with communist leanings. The Jharkhand Party has come to form the main opposition group in the Bihar Assembly and this has been called peaceful revolution: "More peaceful and at the same time not less revolutionary than the merging of Native States in the Indian Administration."

The Jharkhand Party fought the election on the issue of the separation of Jharkhand as a State. The people of North and South Bihar feel that if Chhota-Nagpur is formed into a separate State, Bihar will be deprived of practically all its mineral resources, i.e. its big deposits of iron, mica, copper, coal, bauxite, antimony and china clay. The Editor of *Spark*, himself a Congress M.L.A., has written (Feb. 12, 1952) that the leaders of the Jharkhand Party "are swayed by impulses that have their roots in a deeper psychological revolt than in their political and economic discontent. They go down to the bedrock of age-old accumulation of urges and forces that the Britishers nourished and fostered with deliberate intent in the hope that the disruptive forces inherent in them might stand them in good stead at the right moment. Tribal chauvinism has crystallized into disconcerting shape and proved a force against which all efforts for welfare and uplift have proved unavailing." The Jharkhand Party had an electoral alliance with the Janata Party and an understanding with the Socialist Party. Shri. Jaipal Singh, the leader of the Jharkhand Party, could have won for his party the Ranchi North East constituency for the House of the People. But he preferred to allow the Socialists to contest it. The result was that the Congress won it.

The election symbol of the Jharkhand Party was the cock and they convened all their election meetings by the sound of crowing. Hundreds of people gathered whenever they heard human beings crowing. Even the illiterate, old and short-sighted women made sure that the ballot box had the symbol of the cock before casting their votes. They stood in long queues exactly in the same order in which

their names occurred on the electoral rolls. The tribal people showed far greater cohesiveness and civic sense than the high caste people of other regions.

The Bihar Government shall have to devote much greater effort in winning over the affection of the tribal people. The Education Minister already has announced the intention of the Government to establish a separate University for Chhota-Nagpur at Ranchi. The Government have also become more attentive to the legitimate demands of the Bengali-speaking people of Manbhum.

# 3 (a) BOMBAY

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## CORRECTION SLIP

*('Reports on Indian General Elections 1951-52' by  
Kogekar and Park)*

Table on Page 31

BOMBAY	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Valid votes polled ..	1,15,28,290	1,11,23,242

tinct languages and includes the city of Bombay which is one of the most important commercial and industrial centres in the country. The total electorate of the state is placed at 1,67,90,399 voters. 45 seats in the House of the People have been allotted to this state while the number of members in the State Legislative Assembly is fixed at 315. For electing

Grateful acknowledgement is due to the following persons for their help and assistance, at much personal inconvenience, in collecting many of the facts and in organising the surveys mentioned in the report:

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I am also thankful to Shri. M. K. Narayan Sharma of Belgaum for certain material regarding Karnatak.

the 45 seats in the House of the People the state has been divided into 37 constituencies, 29 being single-member and 8 double-member. For the State Assembly, there are 268 constituencies which include 222 single-member, 45 double-member and 1 three-member.

The distribution of seats between the three regional areas and Bombay City is as follows:

	State Assembly	House of the People
Gujarat .. .. .	98	14
Manarashtra .. .	143	20
Karnatak .. .	47	7
Bombay City .. .	27	4
Total ..	315	45

## PARTIES AND PARTY ALLIANCES

In addition to eight All-India parties which put up their candidates for these elections, Bombay had certain regional parties which reflected the peculiar regional conflicts or aspirations of the people. In Gujarat, the Khedut Sangh Lok Paksha was a party of big and small landowners who were up against the Congress Party on account of the Tenancy laws of the state which hit them hard. Though representing the landowning interests, the party was called "Khedut Sangh" emphasizing that it was fighting the cause of the peasants. Another local party called the Lok Paksha which had little following was allied with the Khedut Sangh in opposing the Congress. The election symbol of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party was borrowed by this alliance and it was readily lent by the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. But there was hardly any ideological affinity between the two. The alliance was said to be working in close collaboration with the Krishikar Lok Paksha—a party started in Andhra by Prof. N. G. Ranga. But the bond between the two, if any, must be very tenuous. It was also reported that the party had some working agreement with a more radical group headed by Shri. Indulal Yagnik.



In Maharashtra, the opposition to the Congress was spearheaded by the Peasants and Workers Party which had the backing of the peasantry—both landlords and tenants. Its origin was partly to be found in certain personal feuds between its leaders who formerly belonged to the Congress and the ruling group in that organisation. Partly it also represented the growing leftist trend in the rural areas of Maharashtra. In order to take on a radical complexion this dissident group took more and more to Marxian thought and in its well-known *Dabhadi Thesis* publicly avowed its acceptance of the 'cominform' line. The party was however opposed to merger with the communists or with other Marxist parties. This latter factor gave rise to a split within it and a small section headed by Shri. Datta Deshmukh formed the Kisan Kamgar Paksha working in close association with the Communist Party. This alliance was further extended to include the left socialist group which broke away from the Socialist Party. The overall influence of this triple alliance however was not very widespread. The Peasants and Workers Party, representing as it did the peasantry and a part of the peasant-based working class in Maharashtra, offered a considerable challenge to the Congress to start with. It had a following also in Hyderabad and in the Marathi speaking areas of Madhya Pradesh. In all these areas it put up its candidates for election. The party was also not averse to making common cause with the Scheduled Castes Federation in constituencies where seats were reserved for these castes in addition to the general seats. The party had a pronounced communal orientation. It was opposed to the Brahmans and appealed to the non-Brahmans to oust the Brahmans from positions of power and influence. A Marxian interpretation put on the Brahman-non-Brahman struggle took the form of identifying the Brahmans with the bourgeoisie and the non-Brahman peasantry with the proletariat. This was all the more remarkable in view of the fact that most of the Brahmans in Maharashtra live by serving in government and private offices or by following the liberal professions and many of the 'peasants' from whom the party received support were substantial landowners. The party

was also opposed to the private trader-cum-money-lenders or Baniyas in the villages who originally belonged to Gujarat, Kathiawad or Rajasthan but who had migrated from there centuries ago. The opposition to the Brahman and the Baniya—the scapegoats for all evils in the land—had a ready appeal in the rural areas against the historical background of the anti-Brahman movement in Maharashtra. The appeal on this ground was far stronger than on that of the half-baked Marxian theories propounded by the more sophisticated, urban leaders of the party.

In Karnatak—that is, the 4 districts in the state where Kannada is the principal language of the people—opposition to the Congress was very weak. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party had tried to win over certain sections which were opposed to the Congress but achieved only limited success. An influential local party was the United Karnatak Party led by Shri. S. K. Hosmani, a former President of the Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee, and by others who left the Congress as a protest against its failure to establish a separate state of Karnatak including Mysore and parts of Madras and Hyderabad along with the 4 Bombay districts. An alliance between this United Karnatak party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party for election purposes showed the weakness of both groups inasmuch as the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party had never shown itself so keen on the formation of linguistic states which was, however, the main plank of the United Karnatak Party programme. In one district of Karnatak the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party made an election alliance with the Peasants and Workers Party of Maharashtra which demanded Belgaum city and certain adjoining talukas for the state of United Maharashtra—a claim not conceded by the United Karnatak Party!

Of the All-India parties, the Congress, though organisationally the strongest of all, had made many enemies in all parts of the state. Ideology apart, in such everyday matters as rationing and control of supplies there was a lot of dissatisfaction among the common people. Corruption and black-marketing were considered to be rampant everywhere and the Congress itself was regarded as shielding the cul-

prits. Popular indignation over the acts of commission and omission of the government controlled by leading lights of the Congress Party was everywhere to be seen. The party, it was felt, was unable to recruit younger people because it had ceased to be progressive in thought and action. Communalism, nepotism, and inefficiency were all blamed on the Congress organisation. Opposition to the Congress on such issues as Prohibition and the consequent increase in illicit distillation and loss of a large amount of revenue for the state was particularly noticeable in Bombay city. As a party the Congress had all the advantages and disadvantages of being the ruling party. Its greatest asset, however, was the absence in the country of any alternative leadership in which the people at large could place their confidence.

The Socialists were the other organised All-India party which, however, had roots in the pre-Independence Congress Party itself. It was the party of the young nationalists looking forward to the establishment of a socialist society without resort to violent means. In Bombay, the Socialists were very active in the urban areas and had considerable influence among the working class. Their contacts with the peasantry on the other hand were slight and their previous association with the Congress and the kind of sophisticated appeal which they made in opposition to the Congress went against them in the rural areas. The Socialists were the only ones to make full use of the elections for popular education through the press, platform, posters and pamphlets. Their opposition to the Congress was matched by their antagonism to the Communists as well as the communalists. They refrained from making an alliance with the Communist or Communist-controlled parties in spite of the better electoral chances that such an alliance was likely to provide. They however joined hands with the Scheduled Castes Federation in spite of the communal character of the latter, but they refused to do so with the Peasants and Workers Party because of its communal orientation. Unfortunately for the Socialists, the Scheduled Castes Federation entered into an alliance with the Peasants and Workers Party and agreed to support its candidate even where a Socialist was contesting as, for example.

in the Poona Central constituency for the House of the People! This alliance did much damage to the socialist cause in Bombay state.

The Communists too, like the Socialists, were not much influential in the rural areas except in certain talukas of Thana and Ahmednagar districts. They had some following in the industrial areas of Bombay and Sholapur. Their strategy was therefore to align with parties which were better placed except in a few constituencies where they had some foothold. They were, however, unable to effect an alliance with any major party or group.

The rightist parties like the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Jan Sangh were not of much consequence though they had pockets of influence in certain areas in the state. The Ram Rajya Parishad was more active in Gujarat than in other regions while the Hindu Mahasabha was active only in a few urban centres in Maharashtra. The Jan Sangh was practically not in the picture at all.

## ELECTIONEERING

Until about a month before the polling date, there was not much of what can be described as feverish activity on the part of the parties to canvass support for their candidates. The voters were also for the most part indifferent to the elections. There was a general mood of resignation to whatever set-up emerged from the poll and an expectation that the Congress was bound to win. In spite of much publicity work on the part of the government, neither the significance of the elections nor the issues involved had percolated to the hearths and homes of the voters.

## SAMPLE SURVEY\*

This mood was well brought out by the result of a random sample survey organised by the present writer with the help of his colleagues and students in the city of Poona.

\* The results of the survey are published here for the first time.

Taking a stratified random sample of households within the Poona city South-West constituency for the Legislative Assembly—a constituency which offered a very good cross-section of the city's population in point of education, occupation and politics—71 student volunteers were sent to interview the voters in them almost exactly one month before the date of polling. A questionnaire containing 12 simple questions was the basis of this interview. In all 532 replies were received. On analysis the following facts were revealed: 182 persons did not know whether their names were in the electoral roll; 250 showed complete ignorance as to the bodies for which the elections were to take place; 144 did not know the name of a single party contesting the elections while only 67 were able to name four or more parties; 155 were going to vote for a party while the rest were either undecided (84) or unable to reply (119) or thinking of voting on the personal merits of the candidates (174). When asked which party ought to succeed in the elections the answers were: Congress 228, Socialists 63, Hindu Mahasabha 46, Peasants and Workers 24, Communist 10, Jan Sangh 7, Ram Rajya Parishad 2, "any anti-Congress" 12, Independent 1, undecided 139. Of the 228 who preferred the Congress, 36 belonged to the educationally advanced groups while 192 to the comparatively uneducated sections in the constituency. The occupational distribution of the sample was: service 159, housewives 112, trade and professions 89, artisans 82, manual labour 35, unemployed 55.

Asked what the issues in the elections were, 197 persons were unable to give any answer. Among the rest several issues were mentioned. The number of times the various issues were mentioned in the replies received from 335 persons (the same person sometimes mentioning more than one issue) were: food and cloth 305, unemployment 38, abolition of zamindari 31, foreign policy 24, prohibition 20, Hindu Code Bill 13, corruption in government 9, literacy 9, United Maharashtra 5, population planning 3, refugees 2, education 2, economic equality 1, individual freedom 1.

## THE CAMPAIGN

During the following month, however, the tempo of electioneering rose rapidly and on the eve of the poll, the whole atmosphere was surcharged with great enthusiasm and expectations.

The campaign was carried on in every conceivable way. Writing slogans on the tar roads and compound walls (sometimes deformed into obscene phrases by either rival partisans or mischief makers), shouting them through loud-speakers fitted to motor vans, holding meetings at street corners as also in large grounds, house-to-house canvassing, touring in batches in rural areas were the various methods employed. Meetings were generally well-attended. Sometimes cultural or social bodies which were themselves not wedded to particular political parties invited representatives of all contesting parties to explain their respective point of view in meetings specially convened for the purpose. Women took a prominent part in the campaign in the urban areas.

## THE PRESS

The Press played an important part both in conveying procedural information as also in campaigning for particular parties or candidates. Independent papers further helped the literate voters by giving an analysis of the various party manifestos as also by giving short biographies of the candidates. A few papers were started specially to support particular candidates and their publication was discontinued soon after the elections.

A survey of 28 Marathi papers published in the Marathi districts of Bombay state excluding Bombay city brought out some interesting facts. The survey was confined to a period of roughly two months, from the middle of November 1951 to the middle of January 1952 by which time all the elections in the state were over. The survey covered 13 daily, 1 tri-weekly and 14 weekly papers. Not all of these were strictly speaking party organs and as some of the widely circulated papers were independent of party affiliation, they could take

an objective view of the situation and guide the voters in regard to the various aspects of the election. They exerted a healthy influence on the propaganda carried out by the different parties. The papers from Poona, and in the case of the Northern districts those from Bombay, exercised a great influence on the mofussil papers. Party papers often fell below the high standard of decency and fair criticism maintained by the non-party papers. The space allotted for election news and views went on progressively increasing as election day approached. Election news from other provinces, except for the speeches of the Prime Minister, was very scantily reported both on account of limitation of space as also for want of much interest. In contrast to the English dailies from Bombay city, there was not much use made of cartoons in most of these papers. Where cartoons did appear, they were very crude and unimaginative.

## ELECTION ISSUES

Apart from the issues mentioned in the manifestos of different parties and having an All-India significance, many issues of regional or local importance were raised during the election campaign. Prohibition, rationing and control, United Maharashtra and United Karnatak, the future of Bombay city were some issues of this character. The Congress, being the party in power, was at a disadvantage in discussions of such issues because it was identified with the views and policy of government. Other parties made much capital of these issues in criticising the Congress Government.

It is, however, doubtful if the elections were fought on definite issues. Each party referred to all the important issues facing the country like economic planning, abolition of landlordism, industrialisation, controls, reform of administration, linguistic provinces, refugee rehabilitation, foreign policy, Commonwealth tie, Kashmir and the Hindu Code Bill. But they were more in the nature of talking points than the substantive questions on which depended the voters' choice. The voters appeared to be interested in giving a general mandate to this party or that for conducting the affairs of

the country during the following five years without pinning it down to particular issues. In a vague way, the approach of a party to various issues might have had something to do with the voters' choice.

## SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

Considerations of caste and community played an important part in the selection of candidates in the case of almost all parties. The Congress ticket was particularly in demand by people who were out to seek power. Without any record of service in the past or of conspicuous ability, many persons took part in what seemed a scramble for selection. If the local authorities of the party proved unhelpful the aspirants would make an approach to higher authorities and in some cases trips to Delhi paid dividends. Some parties made selection dependent on the payment of a fee by the aspirant. In the case of at least one party, this fee was put as high as Rs. 1000/- on account of the poor state of party funds. Whether the fee varied from candidate to candidate is not known with certainty but it is probable that it did. Along with caste the financial standing of the candidate was an important consideration in deciding upon his selection in several cases. Even some of the so-called leftist parties were not an exception to this state of affairs.

The Peasants and Workers Party had put up candidates with much local influence and support against two central ministers—Messrs. N. V. Gadgil (Poona) and C. D. Deshmukh (Kolaba). The Congress regarded both these as very important constituencies for the same reason and the Prime Minister in his capacity as Congress President addressed huge meetings in both the constituencies.

## INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES

A large number of Independent candidates contested the elections from this state. They numbered 38 in the election to the House of the People with 44 contested seats to be filled, and 425 in the election to the Assembly with 311 con-



tested seats. 25 out of the former and 326 out of the latter forfeited their deposits for having failed to secure the minimum of one-sixth of the votes polled in their respective constituencies. The large number of Independent candidates is explained partly by the failure of some individuals to secure adoption by one or other of the parties and by the expectation to cash in on their local position and prestige in securing election. The voters, however, made short shrift of such candidates. In several cases, the Independent candidates could not compete with the organised parties in respect of the expenses of election propaganda and of a large enough number of canvassers to go round the constituencies. They could not also put forth a programme with any chance of being able to carry it out.

## WOMEN CANDIDATES

There were not many women candidates. Only 5 contested the election to the House of the People and 20 to the Legislative Assembly. But the proportion of women elected was 60% in the former and 40% in the latter. In a few constituencies, it was at the instance of the Congress High Command that women were given the Congress ticket in preference to men candidates proposed for selection by the local party organisers.

## POLLING

52.4% of the voters voted in the elections to the House of the People and 51.6% voted in the elections to the Legislative Assembly. Considering these figures and the actual percentage of votes polled in the different constituencies of this state, it cannot be said that there were very wide disparities, between the votes cast in rural and urban areas. It was noticed everywhere that a large number of women exercised their franchise. In several cases the attitude of both men and women to the elections was that of performing a religious duty rather than just exercising a civic right. Folding hands before the ballot box, placing flowers or vermilion

on them etc. were reported from some polling stations. On the whole the polling went on smoothly. A few cases of tampering with ballot boxes took place and a repoll was ordered, but such incidents were negligible compared to the general tone and orderly character of the elections. Credit must be given to the election law and to the election officers who enforced it for this remarkable result.

Much dissatisfaction was expressed with the practice of noting the number of a voter's ballot paper on the list of voters by the polling officers. The fear was that the secrecy of the ballot could not be maintained in this way and it would serve to intimidate voters to vote for a particular candidate. The election commission promptly issued a statement clarifying the position and thus restoring confidence. The commission's plea was that as soon as polling was over, the list of voters on which numbers of voting papers were noted would be sealed in the presence of the candidates or their agents and they would not be opened except under orders of the commission for the purpose of giving evidence before an election tribunal. In cases of impersonation etc. such a record would be very useful in determining a point of fact. Dissatisfaction was also expressed over the system of declaring results piece-meal even while elections in other constituencies were still to take place. It was pleaded that all results should be declared after the polling over the whole state (country) was concluded. The point was made by opposition parties with special reference to the effect of Congress victories in Bombay city on other parts of the state. Their contention was that the Bombay city results affected the votes of people polling on subsequent days to their disadvantage. Imitation rather than thought appears to have been acknowledged as the deciding factor in the choice of a candidate by a voter!

## RESULTS

The Congress secured 50.2% of the votes polled in the election to the House of the People and won 40 seats out of 45. In the elections to the Legislative Assembly of the

state it won 269 seats out of 315 and secured 49.95% of the total votes polled. The only other parties to get any representation at all in both the House of the People and the Legislative Assembly were: The Scheduled Castes Federation with 1 seat in each, and the Peasants and Workers Party with 1 and 14 seats respectively. The Independent candidates secured 3 seats in the House of the People and 18 seats in the State Assembly. The Khedut Sangh Lok Paksha in Gujarat and the Kisan Kamgar Paksha in Maharashtra (a splinter group from the Peasants and Workers Party) secured 1 and 3 seats respectively in the State Assembly. The socialists too secured 9 seats in the Assembly but none in the House of the People. The non-Congress parties were greatly disappointed by these results and attributed the discrepancy in the proportion of seats won and the proportion of votes polled to various factors like the method of single member constituencies, the division of the opposition into several groups and the large number of Independents who diverted a good many votes to themselves.

So far as Maharashtra was concerned, an attempt was made to ascertain the views of the various party leaders on the results of the election by personal interviews on the basis of a relevant questionnaire prepared for the purpose. 12 top-ranking leaders of the principal parties in Maharashtra were contacted for the purpose. While the Congress leaders were naturally quite pleased with the results, argued in favour of the retention of single-member constituencies and pointed out to the Congress vote being the largest polled by any party and therefore entitling it to form the government according to the people's mandate, the opposition parties had a different point of view to put forth. Almost all of them suggested that the administrative machinery was working for the Congress, consciously or unconsciously. The election tours of ministers accompanied by several attending officials impressed the people in the villages with their importance and power, it was pointed out. It was complained that in several rural areas fear was created that unless the people voted Congress their ration cards would not be renewed. Changes in the electoral system, proportional representation or cumulative

voting, were suggested in order to remedy a situation where the victor party secures seats out of all proportion to the votes cast in its favour. The introduction of vocational representation as a supplement to voting in territorial constituencies was urged by one leader, while another suggested that the party in power should resign office before the elections. Self-criticism was also undertaken. Too few workers, the young age of candidates and their canvassers, lack of opportunity for constructive work outside the Congress fold, communalism, lack of towering personalities and, of course, the splitting of the opposition into small groups leading to a division of strength were mentioned as causes of the opposition debacle. The low level of the propaganda of some of the parties and the opportunist way in which electoral alliances were made were also said to have cost many votes to the parties concerned.

### SPECIAL FEATURES

In dramatic effect the debacle of the opposition parties was almost equally matched by the defeat of Shri. Morarji Desai, the prospective Chief Minister of the state at the hands of a Socialist candidate in the Bulsar-Chikli constituency for election to the State Legislative Assembly. The counting and recounting of the votes added to the drama on account of bits of torn ballot papers having been found within the compound of the counting office, and the fall at the second count in the majority of the Socialist candidate from 173 to 19 votes over those cast for Shri. Morarji Desai.

### 3 (b)

## BOMBAY CITY

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Bombay is among the four or five premier cities of India. In size it is the largest with an area of 93.15 square miles, as contrasted with the areas of Calcutta and Madras which are respectively 28.18 and 50 square miles. In population it occupies first place also. According to the Census of 1951 its population was 28,39,270 while that of Calcutta was 25,48,677. Between 1941 and 1951 its population increased by over 50% making the problem of housing most acute. Among the grievances which the middle and working classes have towards the government of the day is its failure to provide proper and adequate housing. Reference was made to this condition by some candidates during the election, although it does not seem to have had much influence on the voting behaviour of Bombay citizens.

Of the total population the number of males was 17,79,259 and the number of females 10,60,011. The number of male voters in the city exceeded by a considerable percentage that of female voters. The male vote therefore was a much more important and decisive factor in determining the results of the General Election in the city than in several other places in Bombay state.

48.02 per cent of the population was literate. This is a fairly high percentage compared with the general level of literacy in the country and is an indication of the prevalence of a better understanding of public questions by the voters in the city.

Bombay is a centre of large scale industry, business, trade, banking and finance. It is also a cultural and educa-

tional centre. These conditions also help to explain the keen interest displayed by the working class and the middle class in the General Election.

The election campaign in the city was conducted generally on the assumption that the community to which a person belonged would determine his voting behaviour. Every candidate made it a point to classify the voters in his constituency on a community basis. Among these communities the Maharashtrians, the Gujaratis, the Parsees, the Bhatiyas and the Sindhis were the more important. In the selection of candidates and their agents, in enrolling canvassers and other workers to carry on the campaign, and in the approach that was made to the voters, these broad divisions on a community basis were important. Religious differences as between the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Christians were also important factors of political significance.

Another characteristic of the Bombay population was the existence of an active and variegated group life among them. There were all sorts of group associations, e.g. Chambers of Commerce, trade unions, clubs, etc. with which individual voters were affiliated and by which they were influenced, even though the associations were not political parties. No voter votes in isolation. Exchange of ideas with the members of associations was another influence to which many voters were subject, although the influence was indirect. Several candidates made it a point to speak under the auspices of such associations in the course of the election campaign.

## THE ELECTORATE

Under the election law, all citizens who were not less than 21 years of age on March 1, 1950 and who were ordinarily resident in some constituency of the city for not less than 180 days between 1 April 1947 and 31st December 1949 were entitled to have their names included in the electoral rolls. The preliminary rolls were prepared and published on November 1, 1950 and a period of 21 days was allowed for filing claims and objections. An order was later issued to the effect that the rolls should be published in English.

As this took some time, the period for filing claims and objections was extended to May 31, 1951. 21,257 claims and nine objections were filed before the revising authority which consisted of the chief judge and the judges of the Small Causes Court. The total number of voters whose names were finally included in the electoral rolls was 14,27,031.

A controversy arose as to how far the electoral rolls were correct. Their correctness was questioned by certain Assembly members at the time of the debate on the delimitation of constituencies in the Legislative Assembly. It was also pointed out by some of the workers during the election campaign that they were not able to trace a number of voters whose names found a place in the rolls. The inference was drawn from this that the rolls contained many false names, the names of dead persons, and so on. But there was no means of checking the extent of the truth contained in these allegations. There is, however, some evidence to show that a fairly large percentage of citizens did not care to find out whether their names were or were not included in the rolls. Political parties, too, did not show much interest in the preparation of correct rolls. From the Census figures, however, it appears that the number of names included in the electoral rolls was slightly in excess of what should have been included. This is a point which has to be taken into consideration in calculating the degree of non-voting in the election.

## THE CONSTITUENCIES

For purposes of elections, Greater Bombay was divided into 25 state Assembly constituencies and three Parliamentary constituencies. Of the former, 23 were single-member and two were double-member constituencies. In the two double-member constituencies, 1 seat was reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Of the 3 Parliamentary constituencies, 2 were single-member and 1 double-member, with 1 of the seats in it reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The electorate had therefore to elect 27 members for the State Legislative Assembly and 4 for the House of the People.

For conducting the elections in the city, senior members

of the civil service holding responsible positions in the service of government were appointed as Returning Officers. 1,484 polling booths were provided on the basis of one booth for about 1,000 voters. The idea was that the booths should be within easy reach of the voters so that they might not have to walk long distances from their places of residence. This was all the more necessary in view of the prohibition of the supply of conveyance to the voters by the candidates or their agents. The presiding officers in charge of polling stations were selected with care. Some of them were officials and some were non-officials, but all of them were persons of status. This point deserves notice especially in relation to the allegation made after polling that some officers (Returning Officers and Presiding Officers) did not take sufficient care to prevent malpractices and that some even connived at them.

November 23, 1951 was the last date for filing nominations; November 27, the date fixed for scrutiny of nominations; and November 30, the date set for withdrawals and for the publication of the list of candidates validly nominated.

## THE CANDIDATES

For the one reserved and the three general seats in the House of the People, twenty-four candidates filed nominations. For the 2 reserved and the 25 general seats in the state Legislative Assembly, 175 persons filed nominations. A large number of these were Independents not affiliated with any political party. Among those that stood on behalf of parties there were several "dummies" who were put up as a precaution against the possibility of the nomination of any of the real candidates being rejected at the time of scrutiny on some ground or other which could not be foreseen. "Dummies" were expected to withdraw if the Returning Officers raised no objection to the candidature of the real candidates. Such precautions were taken as this was the first General Election and as many of the candidates were ignorant of the technicalities of the election law.



The large number of Independents who filed nominations is one feature especially to be noted. Personal ambition prompted most of them. Some Independents said that they did not favour any of the existing party labels. Some denied the value of political parties. Some stood because they wished to fight for certain sections of the people—the refugees for example, who did not get proper representation in any of the contesting political parties. There were some others who had a pet idea of their own, decontrol for example, for which they wished to fight in the legislatures. There were others—experienced, able and competent—who were too proud to join any party. The speculative atmosphere characteristic of the city also encouraged some to stand on the outside chance of being elected.

With respect to candidates belonging to parties, the point that requires to be noted is that competition for being nominated by the Congress Party was keen as most were sure that the Congress would be returned to power and consequently that members of that party elected to the legislature would have opportunities of becoming Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, and so on. The competition was not so keen in respect of the Socialist or the Communist Party. In the case of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, Ram Rajya Parishad and the Hindu Mahasabha candidates had to be invited to file their applications. Congress candidates were finally selected by the Central Election Board from among those who were recommended by the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee. There were a few unseemly quarrels in regard to these recommendations. A letter addressed to Shri. Nehru by three applicants for Congress tickets whose applications had been rejected by the B.P.C.C. (led by Shri. S. K. Patil) created a sensation. There were, however, no other exciting events connected with the selection of candidates.

At the time of scrutiny the objections raised were mostly of a technical and trifling character and even these were raised in the cases of only five candidates. The objection raised by the Socialists against the candidature of the Communists may be noted. It was to the effect that the Communists

owed allegiance to Soviet Russia, a foreign state, and as such were not citizens of India. All these objections were over-ruled by the Returning Officers.

The list of valid nominations as finally published contained the names of 18 candidates for the 4 seats in the House of the People and 127 for the 27 seats in the State Assembly. The following table gives an idea of the number of seats contested by different parties and by Independents.

Name of the party		No. of candidates for the Legisla- tive Assembly	No of candidates for the House of People
1.	Congress Party ..	27	4
2.	Socialist Party ..	24	3
3.	U. L. F. .. ..	8	1
4.	K. M. P. P. .. ..	4	—
5.	R. R. P. .. ..	14	1
6.	S. C. F. .. ..	2	1
7.	Hindu Mahasabha ..	1	—
8.	Bolshevik Mazdoor Party	1	—
9.	Peasants & Workers Party .. ..	1	—
10.	Nationalist Party ..	—	1
11.	Satyagrahi Party ..	—	1
12.	Independents .. ..	45	6
Totals ..		127	18

On an average there were about five candidates for one seat. There were some constituencies where more than five contested for a single seat, and others where less than five contested.

Out of the 127 candidates for the Assembly, 9 were ladies (2 each from the Congress, the Socialist and the R.R.P. and 1 from the Bolshevik Mazdoor Party). Of the 18 candidates for the House of the People, 2 were ladies (1 each from the Congress and Socialist Parties). Of the Assembly candidates, 93 (75%) were Hindus, 12 (9.4%) Muslims, 3 (2.3%) Parsees, 6 (4.7%) Christians, and 4 (1.6%) Harijans. Out of the 18 candidates for the House of the

People, 15 were Hindus, 1 Christian, and 2 Harijans. From the point of view of age most of the candidates in every party belonged to the 35-44 group. Second in order came the middle aged groups (45-54). Thus, out of the 98 candidates about whom information was available, 44 belonged to the first group and 29 to the second. The Socialist Party had the largest number of young candidates. It had 6 belonging to the 25-34 age group, while the Congress had none. There was only one candidate above 65. For the House of the People 9 out of the 14 about whom information was available belonged to the 45-54 group, and none to the 25-34 group.

From the point of view of education, 5 out of the 89 Assembly candidates (about whom information was available) had only primary education, 22 secondary education, 9 were under-graduates, 49 graduates, 1 a diploma holder and 3 had education abroad. Of the 15 candidates for the House of the People (about whom information was available), 2 had secondary education, 2 were under-graduates, 8 were graduates, 1 a diploma holder and 2 had education abroad. The preponderance of graduates needs to be noted. Though the Constitution lays no educational qualification for candidates, such qualifications weighed heavily with most of the parties.

Of the 100 candidates for the Assembly (about whom information was available), 27 belonged to the legal profession, 19 to business, 13 to the medical profession, 8 to journalism, 3 to teaching, 12 to private service, 8 to social work and 10 to political work. Of the 15 candidates for the House of the People, 5 belonged to the legal profession, 3 each to business, social work and political work, and 1 was a doctor. The preponderance of the lawyer element is noteworthy.

Very few of the candidates for the Assembly had had previous legislative experience. This is due to the fact that in the past the number of seats in the legislature was limited. 87 out of the 94 candidates (about whom information was available) had no previous legislative experience. In the case of the 18 candidates for the House of the People, 8 had previous experience in legislative bodies. But among the

candidates for the Assembly and the House, about 36% had experience as members of the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

On the whole the candidates may be said to have been persons above the average in point of education and also representative of a variety of professions.

## ELECTION ISSUES

The issues that were placed before the electorate by the candidates belonging to the various political parties were mainly national and not local. They were issues that found a place in the manifestos published by the parties. These issues were repeated by the candidates in the speeches they made in the city. They were also referred to by the national leaders who came to Bombay during the election campaign to support the campaigns of the various persons nominated by their parties. No attempt is made here to draw a list of these issues as they were of a general character pertaining to the country as a whole and were not of particular significance from the point of view of the city of Bombay.

The Congress candidates naturally referred to the part played by their organisation in the struggle for freedom, the secular concept of the state for which it stood, the integration of the old Indian States into the new Republic, the abolition of zamindaris, the five year plan, and an independent line of foreign policy. The Socialists condemned the conservation of the Congress and its alliance with the capitalist classes and told the electorate that if returned to power the Socialists would abolish landlordism without paying compensation to the landlords, nationalise most of the industries, resort to capital levy, launch schemes of social welfare and bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth. The Communist Party also strongly condemned the "reactionary" policies of the Congress and emphasized that it would work for a united democratic front for the present instead of putting into effect its orthodox economic policies. The Hindu Mahasabha, and the Ram Rajya Parishad referred to re-establishing the unity of India as it was before the partition of the country. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party emphasized

the need for putting into effect the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. But as has already been said, no attempt is made here to list all the issues that the candidates placed before the electorate. Even the Independents referred to issues of a general character like the supply of food, clothing and shelter, the relief of refugees, the promotion of the interests of the middle class, a more realistic foreign policy, etc.

The only local issues that were raised—and this was done to a great extent by the Independents—were the policies regarding prohibition, relief of the refugees who were found in large numbers in the city, housing and the clearance of slums.

A more relevant point, however, is whether the issues referred to by the parties and by the Independents had any appreciable effect on the voting behaviour of the city electorate. The answer is that it had no such effect. This was because the number of issues that the candidates placed before the electorate was so large and their nature so complicated that very few among the general mass of the electorate were capable of understanding them. Items like the co-operative commonwealth, planning, secularism, capital levy, nationalisation, Sarvodaya, etc., were too vague to be grasped clearly by the average voter. These voters were interested much more in the problems of food, clothing, housing, health and safety, but little space was given to these items in the manifestos and the speeches and statements of candidates. It does not appear that the election issues that were placed before the electorate influenced the voting behaviour of the citizens very much.

## THE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

The Governments of India and of Bombay, several non-official and non-party organisations, political parties and Independent candidates adopted various methods for making the electorate in the city take an intelligent interest in the General Elections and become election-minded. The Films Division of the Government of India prepared a documentary film entitled "Democracy in Action" showing the voting

procedure and impressing upon the voters the importance of voting. This film was shown in different localities of the city and in the picture-houses. A number of talks were broadcast in English and in the regional languages from the Bombay Station of the All-India Radio on the General Elections. Shri. Meher, the Chief Election Officer, explained the whole election procedure, the significance of symbols, and the offences punishable under the election law. Shri. M. D. Bhat, Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government, broadcast a talk on "Polling Stations"; Shri. Dhurandhar, Secretary to the Legal Department, broadcast on "Voting Procedure"; and Shri. Dalal, another election officer, on "Safeguarding against corrupt and illegal practices." There were also talks meant especially for women.

Among the non-party organisations, there were the Bombay Women's Election Committee which prepared a brochure on "The Constitution of India" and which also organised several meetings in different parts of the city on the subject of "Elections and the Citizen." Some of the youth organisations invited leaders of different parties to explain their points of view in public meetings which they arranged from time to time. The United States Information Service and the British Consulate also showed films dealing with election procedures and election campaigns in the U.S.A. and Britain. English and regional language papers like the *Times of India*, the *Free Press Journal*, the *Janmabhumi* and the *Navbharat Times* devoted a few columns every week to election queries and answers. All this went a long way in helping literate voters to understand the significance of voting and the nature of the election procedure. All these constitute one aspect of the publicity campaign.

The other aspect of the publicity campaign consisted in the propaganda carried on by political parties in support of their candidates and propaganda by Independent candidates. The means adopted for these purposes were: (1) written, (2) oral, (3) pictorial and spectacular and (4) door-to-door visits. Among the written means were the manifestos issued by the parties and candidates, plus pamphlets and booklets. For example, the Congress Party issued a number

of booklets in the "Vote Congress Series." The Socialist Party issued booklets entitled "You and the Vote," "Capital Levy," "Social Mobility," "Food for all," "Controls end or mend," etc. The Socialist Party was more active in this field than the Congress. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party issued a bulletin explaining its objectives. The Communist Party also issued a few pamphlets bearing on election issues. The other parties did not make much use of this kind of propaganda.

Propaganda was also carried on through party organs like the *Sevika* and the *Congress Sandesh* of the Congress, the *Janata* of the Socialist Party, and *Crossroads* of the Communist Party. Statements of their respective party leaders were published in these organs. Some of the dailies, like the *Bharat* in English, the *Janmabhumi* in Gujarati, the *Dainik Vishvavimitra* in Hindi and the *Lokmanya* in Marathi, supported the Congress, though they were not the official organs of the party. Some others, like the *Free Press Journal* in English, the *Janashakti* in Gujarati and the *Navshakti* in Marathi supported the Socialist Party. The Gujarati daily *Vande Mataram* supported the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. Some others, like the *Times of India* and the *Navbharat Times* were highly critical of the Congress and created (to the extent to which newspapers can create) a sort of bias against the Congress.

Occasionally statements by and on behalf of the candidates appeared in the newspapers. The statement of Shri. Asoka Mehta regarding the alleged attempt of the Congress Party to levy a contribution on looms in the mills was given a prominent place in almost all newspapers. Shri. S. A. Dange appealed to the voters through a letter in the Marathi organ of the Communist Party. The friends of Shri. Chunilal Mehta, an Independent candidate, issued an appeal on his behalf which was published in the papers.

Oral propaganda was carried on through meetings and slogans. The Congress and the Socialists claim to have organised more than a thousand meetings. The slogans that were used were also of a large variety. Some examples are given here. The slogan "Kam do, makan do, varana gadi

clhod do" ("Give work, give houses, or quit the government chairs") was one of the slogans used by the Socialist Party and it meant work for the workers, houses for the houseless and a chance for the occupying of governmental chairs by the party's candidates. Similarly the slogan "Congress ne kya kiya? Deshko barbad kiya" ("What has the Congress done? Ruined the Country") was the slogan used by the Socialist Party and the U.L.F., as against the Congress slogan of "Congress ne kya kiya? Deshko Azad kiya" (What has the Congress done? Brought freedom for the country"). The R.R.P. wanted to trade on the religious feelings of the voters and its slogans were "Dharmaki jaya ho" and "Adharmaka nash ho" (Victory to religion; Down-fall for irreligion). Each party tried to create a favourable atmosphere for itself by trying to predetermine the action of voters through the slogans and catch words.

The parties also resorted to pictorial and spectacular means of propaganda like (1) wall posters and ground bulletins; (2) use of symbols; (3) processions and rallies; (4) moving vans and (5) dramas, kirtans, etc.

The symbols used were as follows:

Congress	Two bulls with yoke
Socialist Party	Tree
K.M.P.P.	Hut
S.C.F.	Elephant
U.L.F.	Railway Engine
R.R.P.	Rising Sun
Hindu Mahasabha	Rider on horse back
Bolshevik Mazdoor Party	Bow and arrow
Satyagrahi Party	Scales

Independent candidates had to choose from among other popular symbols like the flower, the pot, the ladder, the cycle, etc. Thus almost all the symbols were selected from amongst the things of daily use among the masses and had a popular appeal. The effect of this is illustrated by what an old Hindu lady who voted for the R.R.P. candidate said to the polling officer: "I voted for the Sun God so that he may forgive me for all my sins."



Fairly big posters bearing the symbols of the parties were placed on all prominent places, including the walls and the trees in the city. In some of the posters the names of the candidates were also written along with the symbols with instructions to vote for the given candidate. The Congress and the Socialist Party had ballot-boxes depicted in the posters showing their symbols and a human hand throwing the ballot paper in the box. This was highly suggestive. Another poster used by the Congress was one bearing Pandit Nehru's portrait. In one of the posters of the Socialist Party the Congress Government was depicted as a tottering structure. A man was shown trying to over-throw it.

Most of the posters of the U.L.F. had red colour in them. The colour scheme of the posters of the Socialist Party was catching and appealing.

Motion and loud noise which are other determinants of attention were also made use of by parties, especially by the Congress, the Socialist Party and the U.L.F. They carried on propaganda through moving vans, processions, rallies and cyclist processions. Not only were speeches delivered from the moving vans, but also some devotional and party songs were sung. The Socialists took out numerous processions. They placed trees (Socialists' election symbol) made out of real twigs and branches in the vans that headed the processions. Similarly the Congress had two large bulls made out of clay exhibited in their processions and meetings. The Congress and the Socialist Party organised dramas having election themes. The Socialists staged one drama written by P. K. Atre, a well-known Marathi writer and a socialist candidate. Among the dramas staged by the Congress was one named "I too am contesting."

Then there were the house-to-house visits made by the candidates and their workers. This was a normal feature of the publicity campaign. It was very much facilitated by the fact that in Bombay most people live in multi-storeyed buildings which accommodate forty to fifty families in some cases. This concentration of voters in a single building makes it easier for the candidate to approach them. In some cases the voters were directly approached. In other cases they

were approached by group leaders who were especially prominent in labour areas like Lalbagh and Parel and who were known as "dadas". This direct approach was the most effective form of publicity.

## THE RESULTS

All the four seats in the House of the People were won by Congress. Among the defeated candidates were several prominent persons e.g., Shri. Asoka Mehta, the General Secretary of the Socialist Party; Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, a well-known social worker; Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Scheduled Castes Federation and the "chief architect" of India's Constitution, Shri. S. A. Dange, the communist leader; Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, the leader of a group of Independents and Shri. Chunilal Mehta, a wealthy business man. The table below illustrates the distribution of votes among the several parties and groups:

Party	Constituencies			Total Votes
	Bombay South	Bombay North (Double- Member)	Bombay sub- urban	
Congress Party	96,302	149,138 138,137	98,529	482,096
Socialist Party	61,215	139,741	75,729	276,685
United Leftist Front ..	No can- didate	96,755	No candi- date	96,755
Scheduled Castes Federation	"	123,576	"	123,576
R. R. Parishad	"	15,195	"	15,195
Independents	33,387	40,786	35,679	109,852
Satyagrahi Party	No can- didate	12,560	No candi- date	12,560
Nationalists	3,232	No candi- date	"	3,232

The results expressed in terms of percentage stood as follows:

Party	Bombay South			Bombay North			Bombay Suburban			Greater Bombay		
	% of the Electorate	% of Valid Votes	% of the Electorate	% of the Electorate	% of Valid Votes	% of the Electorate	% of the Electorate	% of Valid Votes	% of the Electorate	% of the Electorate	% of Valid Votes	% of Valid Votes
Congress Party	25.9	49.8	39.36	40.15	44.28	27.12	39	42.53				
Socialist Party	16.9	31.52	19.14	19.52	37.89	23.2	21.41	24.93				
U. L. F.	—	—	13.25	13.25	—	—	—	13.25				
S. C. F.	—	—	16.92	17.27	—	—	—	16.92				
Independents	9.0	17.19	5.59	5.7	17.84	10.93	8.06	10.37				
Satyagrahi Party	—	—	1.76	1.76	—	—	1.72	1.76				
Nationalist Party	—	8.0	1.6	—	—	—	8.0	1.6				
R. R. P.	—	—	2.07	2.12	—	—	2.07	2.12				

It will be observed from the above table that although the Congress polled only 33.09% of the total and 42.54% of the valid votes cast, it gained all the four seats. This is the inevitable consequence of the plurality system of representation and of the absence of proportional representation. In none of the three constituencies did the Congress gain its seat by an absolute majority of valid votes cast. Even in Bombay South where it secured the highest percentage of such votes, it got the support of only 49.8%. The disparity between the Socialist and the Congress Parties was nearly 18% for the city as a whole and in Bombay North it went up to a little more than 20%. The other parties and groups came far behind the Congress.

There is also nothing to indicate that if the number of candidates in each constituency was less or if there had been an alliance between the U.L.F. and the Socialists and the other non-Congress Parties, Congress would not have gained all the four seats. In Bombay South the retirement of Shri. Chunilal Mehta could not have brought much strength to the Socialists. Most of his supporters were wealthy businessmen and followers who disliked the capital levy and other items in the Socialist programme and their vote would have gone to the Congress. The retirement of Shri. S. A. Dange from Bombay North could not have helped the Socialists as there were acute differences in the trades union ranks. The communist workers would have abstained from voting rather than vote Socialist. In Bombay Suburban the gap between the Congress candidate and the Socialist candidate was nearly 23,000 votes. Even if some of the Independents had retired, the gap could not have been filled to the advantage of the Socialist candidate. It may therefore be concluded that the results would not have been different even if the contest had been between the Congress and the Socialists and if other parties and groups had not entered the field.

Of the twenty-seven state Assembly seats, Congress won twenty three, the Socialists two, the Scheduled Castes Federation one, and Independents one. The Independent candidate was a quasi-socialist and was supported by the Socialists. Both the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the

double-member constituencies for Sewri-Kala-Chowky and Chinchpokli-Lower Parel were lost by Congress. The only general seat won by the Socialists was that in the Chinchpokli-Lower Parel constituency. The sweeping victory of the Congress as well as the complete debacle of the Socialists were unexpected and caused surprise among all sections of the public. The Independents and other groups and parties achieved very little. The Communists, the communalists and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party dissidents from the Congress were totally repudiated by the electorate.

The table below gives details of the distribution of votes among the different parties and groups in terms of percentage of the total electorate, the total number of valid votes cast and the number of seats won:

Party		Whole of Ir	Bombay Ci	% of seats won of India)	% of seats won of Bombay
Congress Party	..	42.34	42.22	68.5	85.1
Socialist Party	..	9.70	28.21	3.8	7.4
U. L. F.	..	5.25	7.93	4.4	0
S. C. F.	..	1.74	4.66	0.39	3.7
R. R. P.	..	1.21	1.39	0.97	0
K. M. P. P.	..	5.10	0.25	4.4	0
Hindu Mahasabha	..	0.63	0.14	8.0	0
Independents	..	21.17	10.03	9.7	3.7

In Bombay City a higher percentage of valid votes was secured by the Congress, the Socialists, the Communists, the S.C.F. and the R.R.P. and a lower percentage by the Independents than in the case of elections to all the state Legislative Assemblies in the country as a whole. The table on page 62 brings out the difference.

## INDIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS

Party	% of Electorate	% of valid votes	No. of seats	n	of total No. of seats	% of seats con- tested
Congress Party	..	28.24	47.22	23	85.1	85.1 (27)
Socialist Party	..	16.89	28.21	2	7.4	7.7 (26)
K. M. P. P.	..	4.74	7.93	0	0	0 (9)
U. L. F.	..	0.15	0.26	0	0	0 (4)
R. R. P.	..	1.19	1.99	0	0	0 (4)
S. C. F.	..	2.79	4.66	1	3.7	50 (2)
Hindu Mahasabha	..	1.00	0.14	0	0	0 (1)
Bolshevik Party	..	0.02	0.03	0	0	0 (1)
Independents	..	6.00	10.03	1	3.7	2.2 (45)

It has been argued by some that the support secured by the U.L.F., the K.M.P.P., the R.R.P., the S.C.F. and the Hindu Mahasabha would have been greater than the actual figures reveal if these parties had put up candidates in all the constituencies instead of in only a few. This argument rests on the assumption that the supporters of these parties in the constituencies where their candidates were not set up had no opportunity to indicate what party they really wanted to support. The argument is plausible, but it is not of much significance because it was the feeling that they could not secure support of a substantial character that induced parties not to put up candidates in such constituencies and to concentrate all efforts in constituencies in which they had some chance of success. It is worthwhile to know what percentage of the electorate (and of the valid votes cast) were secured by them in the seats they contested. It is found that the U.L.F. and S.C.F. had appreciably more support of the total electorate and secured a larger percentage of valid votes in the constituencies in which they contested than the corresponding percentage calculated for the whole city.

One other point requires to be noted. In as many as eight constituencies the Congress won by an absolute majority of the valid votes. In eleven of the constituencies the percentage of valid votes by which it won ranged from 40.15 to 49.43, and in the remaining four the percentage ranged from 36.42 to 38.85. In the table on p. 64 the constituencies are ranged in the order of the percentage of valid votes obtained by the Congress.

The successful candidate in the Chawpatty constituency (an Independent supported by the Socialists) won by a minority vote, 45.2% of the valid votes, the Congress candidate getting 42.72% of the votes. The difference between the two was 771 votes. The other three candidates who won against the Congress were from the double-member constituencies in which one of the seats was reserved for the Scheduled Castes. In these the non-Congress candidates secured 22.9%, 21.6% and 23.6% of the valid votes, as against 20.7%, 18.8% and 14.4% of such votes secured by the Congress candidates.

CONSTITUENCY	% age of valid votes	
Chakla Mandavi	72.13	
Khara Talao ..	69.56	
Bhuleshwar ..	68.57	
Chira Bazar ..	53.5	
Bori Bunder ..	50.97	
Chembur ..	50.78	
Mazagaon ..	50.51	
Agrapada ..	50.09	
Umarchadi ..	49.43	
Kamatipura ..	49.06	
Tank Phakadi	48.48	
Gurgaum ..	48.39	
Colaba ..	47.65	
Matunga ..	46.87	
Kurla ..	45.56	
Dadar ..	45.12	
Bandra ..	44.64	
Mahim ..	43.22	
Chawpatty ..	42.72	(Lost by the Congress)
Shivri ..	40.15	(Reserved seat lost by Congress)
Lalbagh ..	38.85	
Worli ..	38.33	
Vile Parle ..	37.33	
Walkeshwar ..	36.42	
Chinch Pokli ..	33.24	(Lost by the Congress)

Among the other parties, only the Socialists, the U.L.F. and the Independents secured more than 10% of the valid votes in the constituencies in which they contested. The highest percentage vote that the Socialists secured in any constituency was 47.49; in the case of the U.L.F. the highest percentage vote was 25.57; and in the case of Independents it was 45.2; the lowest percentages were 13.23, 6.89 and 1.76 respectively. In no constituency did the vote for the Congress fall below 33.24%. The support for the Congress therefore was far more solid than that for other parties. This point is especially noteworthy in respect of the U.L.F. which set



up candidates in a few selected constituencies with a substantial working class vote.

Figures also reveal that the splitting of votes among the candidates did not depend very much upon the number of candidates contesting in a constituency. The number, it is true, affected the distribution of votes to some extent, but not appreciably. Among the eight constituencies which the Congress won by a majority vote there was one with a six-cornered contest where the Congress secured 68.57% of the valid votes, two five-cornered ones which brought 53.5% and 50.78% of the valid votes, two four-cornered ones which brought 69.56% and 50.51% of such votes and two three-cornered ones which gave 50.97% and 50.09% of such votes. In the three-cornered constituencies the Congress majorities were not greater but less than those in some of the four-cornered, five-cornered and six-cornered constituencies. This also goes to show that the Congress had behind it solid voting strength not very much influenced by the publicity campaign carried on by other parties.

No one expected that the Congress actually would sweep the polls and that the Socialists would meet with the kind of debacle which overtook them in the elections. When the first results after the elections were known, the *Times of India* wrote (5th January, 1952): "The Congress Party has scored victories surpassing even the most optimistic expectations of the Congressmen in Bombay." On the 8th of January, Shri. Jayaprakash Narayan, the Socialist leader, observed: "I too am at a loss to understand the (Socialist) debacle, because from all accounts there was overwhelming support for the Socialist Party." Dr. Ambedkar stated that he was at a loss to understand the defeat. Between the forecasts and the actual outcome of the election there was a considerable amount of difference.

The victory of the Congress Party was due in the main to the fact that its leaders, past and present, were better known to the electorate than the leaders of the other parties. The Gujarati voters respectfully cherished the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel who were Gujaratis. Pandit Nehru continued to inspire large masses of people.

The voters who were interviewed identified the Congress with Nehru, with Mahatma Gandhi and with Sardar Patel. As a party, the Congress was much older and the freedom struggle was associated with it. In spite of the vigorous propaganda carried on against it and against the achievements of the Congress governments, people had more faith in Congress than in the other parties about which they knew little. The general idea was that there was no guarantee that the other parties would better fulfil their promises and pledges than the Congress and there was therefore no pressing case for a change. "A devil that is known is better than one that is unknown." This was the spirit which animated large sections of the electorate. The Congress Party was in command of larger funds and could employ a larger number of influential workers—especially group leaders—whose word carried much weight with the illiterate voters residing in the working class chawls. The richer classes as well as the higher middle class supported Congress because it stood for stability and ordered progress. The Congress also secured the support of the majority of the Muslim voters through the influence of the Fourth Party whose leaders entered into an informal alliance with the Congress leaders. The Congress was the party in power; this also contributed to its success to some extent.

There is one other point that requires to be considered in this connection. The Congress Government in Bombay was in the opinion of the public more efficient and more honest than in several other states. Its leaders commanded the respect of the people and they were known for their integrity. Controls in Bombay worked much better than in other states. There were no appreciable group rivalries in the Bombay Congress Party as there were, say, in Madras and elsewhere. All these were important factors contributing to the Congress victory.

After the elections some of the Socialist leaders who were interviewed confessed that the alliance between their party and the Scheduled Castes Federation proved injurious to their cause. This alliance came to be resented by the middle class Hindus, and the resentment became greater

partly because of the alliance between the S.C.F. and the Peasants and Workers Party in Maharashtra, and partly because of the alleged attacks which the S.C.F. leader is said to have made against Mahatma Gandhi. Whether the allegations were true or not, they brought about resentment among the middle classes in general and the Gujaratis in particular. In addition to this it was pointed out that in two or three constituencies some Socialist workers who belonged to a particular community suddenly deserted their party at the last moment and were lured into the Congress camp by their community leaders. The Socialist leaders were also of the view—and this was shared by the Communists—that the workers in the city were divided among themselves and they would not give their solid support to either party. This division in the ranks of labour also helped the Congress.

The Socialist debacle was not due to any defect in the party's publicity, organisation or campaign. In this respect they were even better organised than the Congress. But the defect here was that most of the party's workers were young and inexperienced. "They were mere lads, school boys," as one of the leaders put it. Their word therefore could not carry the same weight as that of the Congress workers who were on the whole older and more experienced. This also affected the efforts made on the day of election to bring their supporters to the polling stations. From the point of view of organisation, the Communist Party was also much better than the Congress, but for other reasons it did not command much respect.

There was talk heard that impersonation and certain other malpractices during the election helped the Congress Party. But there is no clear evidence as to the scale on which such malpractices were resorted to and as to why and how they benefited the Congress Party and not the other parties.

# 4

## MADHYA PRADESH

A. AVASTHI  
Nagpur Mahavidyalaya,  
Nagpur.

*Area: 1,30,272 sq. miles*

*Population: 2,12,47,533*

*Electorate: 1,10,75,140*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	29	232
Constituencies .. ..	23	184
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	7
Contesting candidates .. ..	109	1,118
Valid votes polled .. ..	71,92,591	70,06,588
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies .. ..	45	46.1

### INTRODUCTION

Madhya Pradesh has been regarded as a backward state, having large undeveloped areas. Over one-third of it is covered with forests, and nearly a third of the population consists of primitive aborigines. The province, however, has played its part in the national struggle and has long been one of the strongholds of the Congress. It was here that Mahatma Gandhi chose to establish his ashram at Wardha which became the nerve centre of national politics for decades. It is true that the Hindu Mahasabha ideology had

Grateful acknowledgement is due to Shri. I. S. Parihar, Director of Publicity and Information, M.P. and Shri. R. P. Shukla, Lecturer in Politics, and the Press Trust of India, Nagpur Branch, for their help in connection with the preparation of this report.

certain vocal pockets of adherents, particularly in the Marathi areas. It was here, too, that the R.S.S. movement took its birth and spread its network. These movements, however, did not go beyond the middle classes and never touched the masses as such. Whenever Congress campaigns were launched, communalists were found lying low. The whole province was swept by the Congress call.

The Muslim population has been very small (a mere four per cent before partition), and though the Muslim League had some influence on them, the communal situation in the province never assumed the same proportion as in certain other provinces. The Muslims in Madhya Pradesh are largely localised, even speaking Marathi in the Marathi areas and living in every way like the rest of the population. The large aborigine sections have, of course, been mute and politically unconscious. They have lived mostly in the former Indian states, and till recently were protected from all modern influences. To a large section of them, such as in Bastar, the Maharaja had been a demi-God and an object of worship.

That was the background from which emerged the present state of Madhya Pradesh. With the merger of 13 states, the province to-day is one of the largest in area in India. It has rich minerals, forests and other potential resources. Its central location lends it an importance from the point of view of security and communications. Large undeveloped areas hold out bright prospects for future development. The outlook, thus, is hopeful for the province, and with the exploitation and harnessing of its natural resources the state is bound some day to occupy a place of importance in the country. This is the new rising consciousness.

The political conflicts in the province are rooted in its composite character. Madhya Pradesh is a bilingual province, fourteen districts of which form the Hindi-speaking Mahakoshal areas, and eight districts (four of Berar and four of Nagpur) combine to make the Marathi areas. The Hindi-speaking areas dominate the state on account of their large population. They also have behind them a record of active association with the national movement. The Marathi-speaking people, on the other hand, make up nearly one-

third of the province's population, but they are more advanced, better educated and more conscious. This naturally leads to an under-current of resentment against the out-numbering Hindi population who would in a democratic set-up always continue to dominate by sheer weight of numbers. Language, therefore, has become the main dividing wall. The Marathi-speaking people have developed, in this context, what may be called a "minority-psychology." The movement for linguistic provinces is more pronounced among the Marathi-speaking people. Language has tended to become an apple of discord and vested interests have grown round it. Political interests have crystallised under these two linguistic heads.

The two major linguistic regions are further split into sub-regions. The south-eastern rice-producing districts in Mahakoshal form a separate cultural bloc with its own dialect, Chhattisgarhi. This is, of course, a branch of Hindi. These districts are economically and educationally backward and the bulk of the population has taken a back seat in the economic hierarchy. Trade and commerce in the region have been controlled by outsiders. The area is larger than the remaining part of Mahakoshal and is rich in mineral potentials. These circumstances have been responsible for a sense of frustration among the indigenous people and have led to the rise of a cult of local patriotism manifested in the slogan "Chhattisgarh for Chhattisgarhis." The movement is at present confined to a very small section and has not found roots among the larger masses, but the germs of conflict are there.

In the Marathi region, a further sub-division has sprung up in the form of a Berari spirit. From the rich cotton tracts of Berar is collected a major share of the state's land revenues, although by dint of numbers Berar's voice has inevitably been less felt in the conduct of administration. This has led to what may be called an 'under-dog complex' among the Beraris, who look upon the rest of the province as parasitic exploiters.

For want of industrial development, little class consciousness is in evidence in this province. Trade unionism in the state is not highly-developed. That explains the weakness of

the communist or socialist hold among the people. The abolition of malguzari and zamindari has dealt a further blow to socialistic influences. Caste, however, occupies an important role. In Marathi areas, especially, the distinction between Brahmans and non-Brahmans is sharp and some of the socialist movements, such as in the Peasants and Workers Party, have tended to combine class and caste interests. The Scheduled Castes Federation also has drawn its strength from contrast between the comparatively weaker economic position of the Scheduled Castes and the better economic position of the higher castes. Throughout the election, caste was a major consideration in the selection of candidates. This has been vindicated, too, by the election results. Political parties, including the Congress, have been very careful in selecting their nominees from such castes only as have a preponderant number in the constituency.

As has been found, the rural electorate, despite its political backwardness, has been the main deciding factor in the elections. The relationship between the rural and the urban constituencies has not been one of mutual opposition, nor of close alliance. The Indian villagers have for ages made their own decisions in community panchayats. This has invested them with practical wisdom. It was proved during the elections that villagers were capable of making independent decisions without the help of the towns-folk. This is mainly because self-governing institutions have been known to the Indian villager, although the practice of modern parliamentary government may be new. This situation has gone to help the Congress which alone—being the oldest and most organised party—was best known to the rural electorate. The rural masses have preferred to go in for “a known devil” rather than “an unknown devil,” as the opposition explains.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

### *The Congress*

Madhya Pradesh being a composite state, there are three Congress provinces within its territory: Mahakoshal Pra-

desh, consisting of fourteen districts inclusive of six districts of Chhattisgarh; Nagpur Pradesh, consisting of four districts; and Vidarbha (Berar) Pradesh, consisting of the remaining four districts. The President of the Mahakoshal Pradesh Congress Committee is Seth Govind Das, M.P.; that of the Nagpur Pradesh Congress Committee is Shri. M. S. Kannamwar, now the Minister of Health in the State Government; and that of the Vidarbha Pradesh Congress Committee is Dr. G. B. Khedkar, M.P. There are party groupings even within these regional groupings. In Berar there are two groups: one led by Shri. Brijlal Biyani, the Finance Minister, and the other by Shri. Wamanrao Joshi to which group Shri. P. K. Deshmukh, the Education Minister, belongs. In Nagpur Pradesh there are three groups: one led by Shri. M. S. Kannamwar, the erstwhile chief of Nagpur P.C.C., one led by Shri. Dindayal Gupta, the ex-President of Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee and now Food Minister; and the Wardha group led by Dada Dharmadhikari who played an influential role during the last Congress regime in the state. In Mahakoshal as well, Chhattisgarh and Jabalpur are separate and distinct units. The Congress Party in the state is thus highly composite and heterogeneous. The Congress has always had a great following in this state which has so far been a 'safe' Congress state. The party secured approximately 48% of the votes.

### *The Socialists*

The leader of the party is its Provincial Secretary, Shri. V. S. Dandekar. Other prominent local leaders are Shri. Shyam Narain Kashmiri in Nagpur, and Shri. Bhawani Prasad Tiwari in Jabalpur. The rout of the party in this state did not come as a surprise since it never did have any strong foothold here. It got about 9% of votes and 93 candidates lost their security deposits.

### *The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party*

The President of the party in the State is Shri. Thakur Pyarelal Singh, an ex-Congress leader from Raipur and now



the leader of the opposition in the state Assembly. The party's hold is confined mostly to Mahakoshal, especially in Chhattisgarh from where most of its leaders come. At one time the party seemed to have a good chance to give a tough fight to the Congress, but the political opportunism of its leaders discredited them in the public eye. Its leaders, who had resigned from the Congress, rejoined the Congress after Nehru's unity appeal. But when their attempts to reach a compromise with the official Congress group on the number of seats to be given to the rebel group failed, they once again left the Congress. The party polled 5% of the total votes and 44 of its candidates had their deposits forfeited.

### *The Jan Sangh*

The President of this party is Shri. P. B. Gole, who was a Minister in the first Congress Ministry in this state in 1937-39. To prove its non-communal character, the party elected Shri. Jal Gimi, a Parsi, as the President of its Nagpur branch. Jan Sangh, having a close affinity with the R.S.S. which had its birth in Nagpur, was expected to capture at least a few seats. But owing to its poor resources and lack of any organisation, it failed miserably. It could muster only 4% of the votes and 62 of its candidates lost their deposits.

### *The Ram Rajya Parishad*

Shri. B. G. Khaparde, a Minister under the Montford reforms government, is the President of the party in the state. It secured 3% of the total votes and 24 of its candidates forfeited their deposits. The Parishad concentrated its work in the former princely states of Chhattisgarh.

### *The Scheduled Castes Federation*

Its important leaders in the state are Shri. Aole and Shri. Kamble. It polled 4% of the votes and 23 of its candidates lost their deposits. It is worth noting that the Marathi-speaking districts of the state were the strongholds of this party. Mahars, to which caste Dr. B. R. Ambedkar himself

belongs, and who form an important section of the Scheduled Castes both in numbers and importance, are behind this party. Yet the party drew a blank.

### *The Peasants and Workers Party (Shetkari Kamgar Paksha)*

It is a branch of the party which has its origin and stronghold in Maharashtra. Its hold is confined to Berar, particularly in Buldana district. Its local leader is Shri. Ghorpade. It polled only 2% of votes and 16 of its candidates lost their deposits.

### *The Forward Bloc*

It has two groups within it, Subhasists and Marxists. The leader of the former is Shri. R. S. Ruikar, an influential labour leader, and that of the latter is Shri. R. Haldulkar. 13 of its candidates lost their deposits and both the groups together polled even less than a lakh of votes.

### *The Communists*

Shri. B. N. Mukherji is the leader of the party. It polled only about 25,000 votes and nine of its 11 candidates forfeited their deposits. One of its candidates, Shri. Sudam Deshmukh, offered a serious opposition to Dr. A. G. Sonar (Congress), a Parliamentary candidate from Achalpur (Berar).

### *The Hindu Mahasabha*

Nagpur is the home town of its President, Dr. N. B. Khare, yet the party put up a very poor show in the state. Dr. Khare himself, a Parliamentary candidate from his home town, lost his security deposit. For Assembly elections, it put up only one candidate who polled 7055 votes.

### *The Lok Congress*

This party was formed on the eve of elections by Pt. D. P. Misra, ex-Home Minister, after his exit from the Con-

gress. Its claim to be an All-India party was rejected by the Election Commission, but it secured recognition in the state and got the symbol of a 'pitcher.' It put up only two candidates for Assembly elections, Pt. Misra himself being one. The party polled only 5,199 votes and both of its candidates lost their deposits. The rout of Pt. Misra in his own home constituency was a surprise in view of his immense political influence in the state before his exit from the Congress.

### *The Swatantra Congress*

It cannot be called a party, but only a group. It was formed by Thakur Chedilal, ex-President of the Mahakoshal P.C.C. after the failure of talks for a settlement with the official Congress Party. It was not given official recognition and was more in the nature of a working arrangement among Independents during the elections. The symbol of such candidates was 'a pair of scales'. The group, however, failed to make any headway and even its leader failed to be elected.

## PARTY ALLIANCES

The electoral alliance between the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Socialist Party worked here as a part of an All-India arrangement. But in some constituencies they did not co-operate despite their countrywide alliance. Though there was no formal alliance, the Jan Sangh, R.R.P. and Hindu Mahasabha supported each other. These parties also had the sympathy and support of the R.S.S., unofficially. In certain constituencies there were formed convenient election alliances to oppose the Congress. For example, in Akola all other parties, whether of the right or of the left, withdrew their candidates in favour of Dr. Joglekar, an Independent candidate who was opposed by Shri. Brijlal Biyani, a Congress candidate. Similarly in Raipur all other party candidates withdrew in favour of Thakur Pyarelal Singh, the K.M.P.P. candidate to defeat the Congress candidate. In Nagpur, the Jan Sangh supported Shri. Ruikar (Forward Bloc Subhasist).

## CANDIDATES

In the selection of candidates important considerations were social status, educational qualifications, political background, financial ability to defray election expenses, language and caste. Caste, being an age-long institution rooted deep in the native soil, was bound to play an important role in elections. In Berar, Patils were put up as candidates in predominantly Patil constituencies, and Deshmukhs in predominantly Deshmukh constituencies. Similarly in Chattisgarh 'Kurmis' were set up as candidates in predominantly 'Kurmi' areas. 'Teli' candidates were put up in 'Teli' areas. 'Koshti' candidates in 'Koshti' areas and so on. Ex-rulers and landlords were much sought after by all parties because of their resources and influence.

## ELECTIONEERING

Madhya Pradesh had already some experience in holding general elections, though on a more restricted franchise. This stood the state in good stead in the recent elections. The tempo of the electioneering campaign increased with the approach of the elections. Congress propaganda drew pointed attention to the record of past services and sacrifices, and to the fact that the Congress was the only national organisation that fought for national independence. To vote against the Congress was supposed to be to vote against Nehru, the political heir of Gandhiji—the father of the Nation. Congress propaganda also claimed exclusive authorship of the work of the National Planning Commission. The close resemblance between the Congress flag and the national flag stood the Congress in good stead, and the party managers did not fail to cash in on it.

The leftists, including the Socialists, Forward Blocists and Communists, emphasised the abolition of Malguzari without compensation. Other issues touched upon were fixation of minimum and maximum salaries, social insurance and social security, improvement of housing conditions, etc. The rightists, including the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya

Parishad and the Jan Sangh, followed a common revivalist approach and concentrated their attention upon the cultural aspect. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party claimed to be the only genuine follower of Gandhi's and pointed out the discrepancies between the principles and policies of the official Congress and Gandhian economies. The opposition parties, through slogans, posters and pamphlets, concentrated on the acts of omission and commission of the Congress in office.

The usual features of electioneering were to be seen everywhere. Regular mass meetings, in-camera meetings of party organisers, the assistance of peripheral organisations, dissemination of brochures, manifestos and other political literature, display of election signs, organisation of processions and demonstrations were the common features of the campaign undertaken by all political organisations and parties. Besides the mobilisation of local election machinery each organisation utilised the services of its 'Big Guns.' Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the Jan Sangh President, Shri. Jayaprakash Narayan, the President of the Socialist Party, Shrimati Prabhawati Raje, the Vice-President of Ram Rajya Parishad, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the President of the Scheduled Castes Federation and other luminaries of the various All-India organisations toured the state in support of the candidates of their respective parties. Independent candidates, having no programme to offer, concentrated on the evils of the Congress regime.

In public speeches, as also in the press statements of party leaders, there was often more heat than light. The differences of the various party-manifestos were more in emphasis and priority than in substance or in principles. Inevitably, as electioneering rose to a crescendo, the issues stressed by party and independent spokesmen shifted from principles to personalities. Personal rivalries and mutual jealousies manifested themselves in harangues replete with innuendoes, invectives and diatribes. Dirty linen was often washed in public. The methods adopted by various party candidates and independents for canvassing votes were often impeachable. Evidence of communalism, casteism, parochial-

ism and linguism was available. Acharya Mashruwalla, a close follower of Mahatma Gandhi and the Editor of his paper *Harijan* has employed strong language in criticism of the methods adopted by individuals and organisations in the electioneering campaign. According to him appeals to caste or community were regarded as the least offensive. Some of the more reprehensible methods, according to him, have been purchase of votes with money, or by feeding, or distributing liquor or sweets; it was also observed that votes were secured by coercion, intimidation, misrepresentation about the adversaries and their parties, exploitation of the ignorance of the masses in various ways, including the spread of superstitious notions, etc. In his view, with which it is difficult to disagree, "almost every party has been guilty of setting low standards of public morality." The money spent by candidates in addition to expenses borne by their party-organisations have been enormous. In some cases they have far exceeded the limit set by law, though they may not admit this openly. Election petitions have been filed on this score. The general consensus of responsible opinion is that the present method of direct elections is prohibitively expensive.

There were not many local issues in evidence. One thing that was exploited by the opposition parties was the inconvenience caused to the rural population by the void created by the abolition of *Malguzari* and the failure of Government to substitute a suitable machinery in place of 'Malguzars' (landlords). The inconvenience was particularly caused in matters of grazing (*Charai*) rights and rights acquired by usage called '*Nishtar*.' In Bastar, the district dominated by the aboriginal tribes, emphasis was mainly laid on the special position of these tribes. Patels and Patwaris played an important role in rural constituencies in moulding public opinion.

## THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

Throughout the election period the Press was alert. Its columns were thrown open for election advertisements on behalf of candidates irrespective of their party affiliations.

The qualifications and photographs of the candidates, their life sketches, their statements and counter-statements were given due publicity. The Press also tried to educate the voter in the techniques and process of elections and to bring home to the citizen the importance of elections and voting. For this purpose it gave full publicity to official notifications, communiques and hand-outs explaining the process of election. Some articles dealing with the importance and technique of elections were also published. Letters to the Editor columns gave full expression to public opinion about the elections. The *Nagpur Times*, an English daily, brought out two very interesting and instructive columns entitled "Know Your Legislators" and "Choose Your Ministers," the first column giving short biographical sketches of M.L.As., and the second giving a cross-section of public opinion about the formation of the state Ministry. The day-to-day election notices gave to the public the latest party position in the Assembly. Special mention should be made in this connection of the excellent work done by the Press Trust of India whose representatives made a detailed study of the progress of elections and published for public benefit an analysis of the election results.

The sympathies of the Press were naturally divided, though by and large they were with the Congress. Even the non-Congress press usually sympathised with the socio-economic programme of the Congress. Of course, there was no dearth of papers whose main occupation during election days was to vilify the Congress and in particular the Shukla Ministry. The anti-Congress press emphasized the acts of commission and omission of the Congress ministry, its inefficient administration, its inability to check corruption, the personal failings of ministers, etc. Having no constructive programme of its own, the opposition press goaded the electorate to vote against the Congress on these grounds. Apart from the avowedly partisan press, the balanced section of the press, while not oblivious of the failings of the Congress Party and in particular its Ministry, appealed to the electorate to vote Congress as it was the only stable party. At the same time it exhorted the Congress to improve its administration.

It also emphasized the need for a strong opposition party to function as parliamentary opposition to the Congress Party. The pact of the Socialists with the Scheduled Castes Federation came in for a good deal of criticism. The responsible section of the press saw with dismay the emergence of numerous parties and the consequent splitting up of the non-Congress ranks.

## POLLING

Madhya Pradesh has a large area, thinly populated, covered by wild and hilly regions and poorly supplied with roads. It is particularly so in the newly integrated states where roads are conspicuous by their absence. Vast areas are covered by forests and hills without means of communication, and the large majority of the people there is backward. There was, therefore, much apprehension about the satisfactory functioning of the election machinery. It is to the credit of the administrative authorities that the election organisation, on the whole, functioned well and peacefully.

The polling arrangements were excellent. A large number of polling stations were set up so that no voter may have to walk or travel more than three miles, on the average, to reach the booth. Each booth was to serve approximately 1,000 voters. Since under the election rules all election propaganda was disallowed on the polling day, political parties were not allowed to canvass within a 100 yards of the booth and candidates could not use vehicles—their own or hired—to fetch voters. Polling was a calm affair. Government servants, clerks, officers, college teachers, school masters, and officials of local bodies were all employed as polling officers. Government servants from the highest to the lowest were found busy with election work of some sort. The polling went off peacefully and conveniently. Even during rush-hours the voters stood patiently in queues. Fine maintenance of law and order was reported from every quarter during the election period, and the officials played their part with impartiality and fair sense of duty. There were strict directives from the government to officials to



behave impartially. Punctuality and orderliness were strictly observed. It was a pleasant sight to see crowds of people coming up to the polling booths. The women participated in unexpectedly large numbers. Even the blind or the beggars did not miss their chance.

Surprisingly enough the voting was heavier in rural areas than in urban areas and illiterates took more interest than the educated in voting. It is interesting as well as instructive to note that in the state's most highly educated and enlightened constituency, viz., Nagpur-1, the voting was very poor and leisurely. Hardly a third of the voters cared to exercise their franchise. In fact, there was a general apathy and indifference towards elections on the part of the intelligentsia of the State.

The illiterate and ignorant voter, on the whole, exercised his vote intelligently. But in certain booths in backward areas the voters, instead of putting their ballot papers inside the ballot boxes through the slits, just placed them on the top of the boxes. Hundreds of such votes were wasted. In certain places the voters worshipped the boxes and put some small coins in the boxes along with sacred rice and vermilion.

Instances of abuses of election laws were few and insignificant. Only in one polling booth in Jabalpur-1 constituency was repolling held. The only serious allegation made by opposition parties was that of tamperability of ballot boxes. A demonstration was given before Shri. Meher, who was deputed by the Election Commissioner to look into the allegation, at Nagpur to show how the ballot boxes were defective and could be tampered with with seals intact. But there is no proof that ballot boxes were actually tampered with.

## ELECTION RESULTS

Of the 29 seats in the House of the People, the Congress won 27 and Independents 2. In all, 109 candidates contested the 29 seats (88 for 22 general seats, 14 for 4 Scheduled Castes seats and 7 for 3 Scheduled Tribes seats). There were

two women candidates—one Congress and one Forward Bloc (Subhasist). Of these, 42 candidates lost their security deposits. The Congress secured about 50% of the votes polled.

Among the Congress candidates elected to the House of the People were two sitting members, Seth Govind Das, President of the Mahakoshal Pradesh Congress Committee and Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh, a prominent educationist of Berar, Shri. S. N. Agarwal, a famous Gandhian economist, Dr. G. B. Khedkar, President of the Vidarbha Pradesh Congress Committee, and Shrimati Anasuyabai Kale, formerly Deputy Speaker of the state Assembly. The two successful Independent candidates were Maharajkumar Chandrakeshwar Singh from Surguja-Raigarh constituency, and Shri. Muchaki Kosa from Bastar Scheduled Tribes constituency. Prominent among the defeated candidates were Shri. H. V. Kamath, ex-M.P. who lost by a narrow majority of 174 votes, Dr. N. B. Khare, the President of All-India Hindu Mahasabha (who lost his security deposit), Shri. P. B. Gole, President of the Jan Sangh, and Shri. B. G. Khaparde, the local President of the Ram Rajya Parishad.

Of the 232 seats in the state Assembly, the Congress won 194, the K.M.P.P. 8, the Socialists 2, the Peasants and Workers Party 2, Ram Rajya Parishad 3 and Independents 23 seats. Two Independent members later joined the Congress party. The Congress had not put up its own party candidates against these Independents and had supported them in the election. They were former Congressmen.

Of 232 seats, 7 were filled without contest. Of these, again 3 went to the Congress and 4 to Independents. There were 1,110 candidates belonging to 13 parties standing for the 225 contested seats, including 187 candidates for 52 reserved seats (31 for Scheduled Castes and 21 for Scheduled Tribes). There were 15 women candidates (9 Congress, 1 Socialist, 1 K.M.P.P., 1 Peasants and Workers, and 3 Independents). Of the 1,110 candidates, as many as 656 (or nearly 60%) lost their security deposits, making the exchequer richer by Rs. 1,65,000. Of these only four were Congress candidates. 428 Independents contested 193 seats and secured about 23% of votes cast. 364 of them lost their secu-

rity deposits. The Congress secured 48%, Socialists 9%, K.M.P.P. 5%, R.R.P. 3%, the Peasants and Workers 2%, Jan Sangh 4%, Scheduled Castes Federation 4% of votes cast.

On a regional basis, the 232 seats were distributed as follows:

Mahakoshal 149, Nagpur 42 and Berar 41. In Mahakoshal the Congress secured 118 out of 140 seats which it contested. The K.M.P.P. also won 7 out of its 8 seats in Mahakoshal (3 in Raipur, 3 in Hoshangabad and 1 in Raigarh districts). The Socialists won one seat in this region. 14 out of the 23 Independents returned to the state Assembly are also from Mahakoshal.

The Congress suffered a setback in Bastar district (a newly integrated state) where after five unopposed returns—two in its favour and three for Independents—it did not win any of the five contested seats, and lost security deposits in the case of three seats. All elected candidates in this district are Independents, including the Maharajadhiraj Bhanu Pratap Deo, ex-ruler of Kanker, who secured the largest number of votes in the state elections. In Surguja, another integrated district, the Congress lost three out of five contested seats to Independents; and in Raigarh district, also a newly integrated state, the Congress lost one each to the K.M.P.P., R.R.P. and Independents, the latter two being the ex-rulers of Jashpurnagar and Sakti respectively.

In Nagpur Pradesh the Congress secured 93% seats; 39 out of its 42 candidates were elected. The party got 52% of the votes polled in this region. The three seats lost by the Congress went one each to the K.M.P.P., Socialist and Independent. In Nagpur City the Congress won 4 out of the 5 seats, 1 having been secured by "General" Awari (a popular ex-Congress leader), the K.M.P.P. leader for this Pradesh.

In Berar, the Congress annexed 36 out of 41 seats, the remaining 5 seats going to the Peasants and Workers Party (2) and Independents (3).

On a districtwise basis, the Congress Party captured all the 56 seats from seven districts, lost but one in each of eight others and 23 more in the remaining seven districts.

Nine Muslims, who stood on the Socialist, K.M.P.P. and S.C.F. tickets and as Independents were all unsuccessful. While seven out of the eight Congress Muslim nominees were returned with good majorities from all over the state, one candidate was defeated by the R.R.P. in the integrated state of Kawardha. Nine women, including one sitting member, all of the Congress Party, have been elected to the Assembly, four from Mahakoshal, three from Nagpur Pradesh and three from Berar.

Among the candidates elected to the Assembly were three Ministers, including the Chief Minister, Pandit Shukla, out of the five Ministers who contested; eight former rulers of the integrated Chhattisgarh states; nine women; and seven Muslims. Out of the eight ex-rulers, five have been elected on Congress tickets, one on the R.R.P. ticket, and the other two as Independents. In all, 39 sitting members have been re-elected to the Assembly—two as K.M.P.P. nominees and two as Independents, the rest belonging to the Congress.

Among the notable defeats were those of two Ministers. Shri. A. M. Makade, Minister for Excise, was defeated by a narrow majority in his home-town Tumsar (Bhandara district) by Shri. Narayan Kavemore, who stood on the Socialist ticket. Another defeated Minister was Shri. Rameshwar Agnibhoj, Minister of Public Works, in his home-town Harda (Hoshangabad district) by Shri. Premnath who stood on the K.M.P.P. ticket. Pt. D. P. Mishra, former Home Minister, stood from three constituencies for the Assembly, but actually contested only Jabalpur, his home-town, where he was defeated by the Congress candidate, Jagdish Narain Awasthi, by an overwhelming majority of votes. Another notable defeat was that of Shri. R. S. Ruikar, General Secretary, All-India Forward Bloc (Subhasist).

## REVIEW

The state's first general election on the basis of adult franchise was, on the whole, satisfactorily conducted. Misgivings on the score of a precipitate introduction of universal franchise, considering the 90% illiteracy in the state, proved

unfounded. The electorate, deeply conscious of its newly-achieved freedom, evinced robust common sense, sagacity and maturity of judgement. The rural as well as the urban electorate proved to be politically adult. General ignorance of the process of democratic elections, large scale illiteracy, a lack of political experience, long distances, difficulty of terrain, and undeveloped means of communications were some of the difficulties successfully surmounted.

Elections throughout the state were not held on the same day. The election process was spread over more than a month starting on 22nd December 1951, and ending on 24th January 1952. Due to the deaths of the duly nominated candidates in the three constituencies of Harda (Hoshangabad), Kuthrel (Durg) and Samri (Surguja), polling had to be postponed in these places, and took place on February 2, 16 and 27 respectively. Election results were being declared as the polling proceeded. This led to significant consequences. The reported landslide in favour of the Congress in some constituencies weakened and demoralised the opposition in others. If results had been withheld, or if polling had taken place on the same day throughout the state, the final party gains might have been different. Another notable feature of the elections was the large number of candidates contesting from different constituencies. The record for the largest number of candidates goes to Khuwai (Sagar district) where 17 candidates contested two seats, including one reserved for Scheduled Castes. For single member constituencies, Nagpur-1 carried away the laurels for the largest number of candidates, namely 13.

The overwhelming victory of the Congress and the crushing defeat of other parties in the state was due to: (1) the Congress being the only organised and known party, (2) the growth of mushroom parties on the eve of the election; (3) lack of time for the opposition parties to organise and consolidate themselves; (4) poor resources of other parties; (5) the glorious past of the Congress; and (6) above all, the magnetism of the Congress President, with his unique psychological and emotional mass approach. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Congress victory was mainly

Nehru's victory; any party with Nehru as leader would easily have swept the polls. Yet the overwhelming Congress victory does not represent a proportionate preponderance in the electorate. It should not be forgotten that the Congress could muster less than 50% of the total votes cast. Under a system of proportional representation, the Congress' strength in the Assembly would have been in proportion to its strength among the voters. The existence of numerous parties and groups and a large number of Independent candidates divided the opposition ranks and made the emergence of a strong opposition impossible. The victory of 23 Independents in the Assembly elections, as against 8 won by the most successful opposition party, is significant. It shows that persons with local influence could defeat even organised parties.

In brief, the state has stood firm in its loyalty to the Congress. But unless the Congress Party is able to wipe out corruption, restore efficiency in administration and improve the economic conditions of the masses, this traditional loyalty to the Congress may be broken. However, there is no sign of the emergence of any one organised opposition party. Communist influence in the state may be regarded as negligible.

A striking feature of the elections in Madhya Pradesh, as elsewhere, has been the ratification by the electorate of Pandit Nehru's call for a secular democracy in India. All candidates of the minority communities contesting on Congress tickets have invariably been elected. It is significant inasmuch as it has given a deathblow to communal politics.

# 5 MADRAS

**T. BALAKRISHNAN NAYAR**  
*Presidency College, Madras*

*Area: 1,27,790 sq. miles*  
*Population: 5,70,16,002*  
*Electorate: 2,69,80,956*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	75	375
Constituencies .. .	62	309
Uncontested seats .. .	2	3
Contesting candidates ..	291	1,674
Valid votes polled ..	1,99,29,665	1,99,97,256
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..	56.4	55.2

## LOCAL PARTIES

The Tamil Nad Toilers Party may be described as a hotch potch of dissidents from the Congress and the Vaniya-Kula Kshatriya Sangha which is essentially a caste association of Vaniyakula Kshatriyas together with some anti-Congress elements. The party put up 7 candidates for the House of the People and won a total of 4, polling 889,292 votes; 2 forfeited their deposits. For the state Assembly, it set up 31 candidates winning nineteen seats and polling a total of 783,346 votes; 4 candidates forfeited deposits. It is difficult to gauge the party following. The stronghold of the party is the District of South Arcot in the state.

The Commonweal Party has its main party strength in the neighbouring district of North Arcot. The nucleus of the

party is the Vaniyakula Kshatriya Sangha, an association for the promotion of the Vaniyakula Kshatriyas, which for some-time has been demanding representation in the services and admission to educational institutions on the basis of their community strength in relation to the total population of the state. Just before the elections, the Sangha transformed itself into a political party attracting to itself some members of progressive non-Brahman communities also. The leader of the party is Shri. Manickavelu Naicker, now a member of the Madras Cabinet. The party set up 3 candidates for the House of the People and won all the 3 seats that it contested, polling 325,398 votes. For the state Assembly, it set up 12 candidates of whom 6 were successful, and polled 193,598 votes. One of the candidates for the Assembly forfeited his deposit.

The Justice Party, otherwise known as the South Indian Liberal Federation, was the most powerful party in the state at one time. Its present leader is Sir P. T. Rajan. Though the membership of the party is open to all communities including Brahmans, it is essentially a party of non-Brahmans. In the words of the leader of the party, the party stands for 'purity, honesty and integrity in public life.' The party is against prohibition but is in favour of temperance. It wants communal representation to be restored and advocates the formation of a Federation of Autonomous Linguistic States of the South (viz.) Tamil Nad, Andhra Desa, Kerala and Karnataka linked together with other parts of India for Defence, External Affairs and Communications only. In the General Elections, the party set up one candidate for the House of the People, who was defeated. For the state Assembly, it entered 8 candidates for a total of 9 seats—one contesting from two constituencies—and won only 1 seat, polling 82,231 votes. Four candidates forfeited their deposits. Judged from the total number of votes polled, the party cannot be said to have any large following.

The Republican Party is pledged to scrap prohibition and to liquidate big land-holders. The leading lights of the party are Shri. H. D. Raja and Shri. S. Ramanathan, the latter at one time a member of the Congress. It set up one candi-



date for the House of the People who did not win; and in the elections to the state Assembly, the party contested 6 seats losing all of them. Two of the candidates for the Assembly forfeited their deposits. In the Parliamentary elections, the party polled 9,535 votes and in the elections to the state Assembly 48,233 votes.

An All-India party with its ramifications extending over the whole sub-continent before partition, the Muslim League in the Republic of India to-day is a local party confined to the State of Madras. In the words of its leader, Mohammed Ismail, the League stands for the economic, religious and educational needs of the community. In the Elections, the League set up candidates in areas where the Muslims were in a majority and also sponsored non-Muslims under a Muslim League ticket. For the Parliamentary election its only candidate won the seat that it contested with 79,470 votes. For the state Assembly, it contested 2 seats including 1 seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes and won 6 seats, 5 general and 1 reserved for which it had put up its own nominees. In the state Assembly elections, the party polled 181,950 votes; 3 of its candidates forfeited their deposits.

The only candidate put up for the Assembly by the All-India Agriculturists' Union in the Chingleput constituency forfeited his deposit. He polled a total of 1,643 votes only.

## PARTY ALLIANCES

(a) In the General Elections in Madras, the Communist Party of India, which is an All-India party, allied itself with the Dravida Kazhagam, a local party. The latter did not put up candidates for any seats either for the local Assembly or for the House of the People. According to a Communist paper (*Crossroads*, dated the 28th December, 1951) the Communists' alliance with Dravida Kazhagam was based upon the following points of agreement between them:

1. The Dravida Kazhagam stands for replacing the Congress Raj;
2. It is a fighter for civil liberties;
3. It supports workers' and peasants' struggles;

4. It is a friend of the U.S.S.R., Peoples' China and the Liberation Movement in Asia.

The two parties, however, differed from each other (as per the Communist paper's diagnosis) for the following reasons:

1. The C.P.I. is opposed to the anti-Brahmanism of the Dravida Kazhagam;
2. It does not agree with the Dravida Kazhagam's theory of Dravidasthan.

The alliance between the two parties was not, however, an electoral alliance as the Kazhagam was not itself contesting the elections. All that it did was to promise support to the Communist candidates in constituencies where they contested the seats. In fact the hope of the Communist Party was that their alliance with the Kazhagam would give the latter the proletarian leadership which would ultimately enable it to get rid of its unsatisfactory—from the Communist point of view—features.

(b) Another election alliance was that between the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation. It was stipulated that the Scheduled Castes candidates adopted by the league for the Scheduled Castes reserved seats for the two constituencies in the State (viz.) Malappuram in Malabar and Kalyanadurg in Anantapur, would not be opposed by candidates put up by the Federation. With regard to other seats reserved for Scheduled Castes in the state, the League promised to support the candidates set up by the Federation and the latter was to support the candidates set up and adopted by the League.

(c) The Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in the state forged an electoral alliance, the object of which, according to their leaders Shri. J. P. Narayan and Acharya J. B. Kripalani, was to avoid triangular contests so that they might, where they opposed the Congress, carry on a straight fight with it.

(d) Yet another election alliance was that between the K.M.P.P. and the C.P.I. in Malabar District of the state where they jointly put up 24 candidates to the state Assembly and 6 to the House of the People. In the same district the C.P.I. and K.M.P.P. alliance supported three Independents and one

socialist to the state Assembly. Out of the twenty-four state Assembly candidates jointly put up by the two parties 14 were Communists and 10 belonged to the K.M.P.P.; of 6 put up for the House of the People, 4 were Communists and 2 nominees of the K.M.P.P. In Tamil Nad the C.P.I. supported 25 Independent candidates.

## ELECTIONEERING

The General Elections, more stupendous than any before, have been characterised by ingenuity and resourcefulness on the part of parties, candidates and their supporters, of an order hitherto unexampled in the history of elections in our state. Every known medium of propaganda was pressed into service including the very birds of the air carrying tiny placards exhorting voters to vote for particular candidates. In quite a few cases the qualities and the achievements of candidates were retailed to the voters in the form of ballads because of the belief that anything conveyed in the form of music will have a greater appeal to the heart than programmes explained in straight talks and buttressed by arguments. The pattern of electioneering, it must be admitted, everywhere and often took ugly shapes as when enthusiasts on behalf of their candidates would not leave any vacant wall-space along main thoroughfares undisfigured by what was undoubtedly vile propaganda. The police at Kumbakonam had to notify the public by beat of drums that disfigurement of walls and writing on them except with the consent of the owners was an offence punishable under the Police Act. The Government of Madras removed the ban imposed previously on the wives and dependents of the government servants preventing them from taking part in election propaganda so that the number of enthusiasts working in the propaganda and counter-propaganda sections of party offices was enormously increased. Agencies distributing petrol opened depots in many parts of the state where there were none over a radius of twenty miles so that easy supplies might be available for electioneering work by the candidates. The Chief Electoral Officer for the Madras state, Shri. S. Venkateswaran, I.C.S., gave a series

of five radio talks in English to educate the electorate and to convey necessary information to contesting candidates. These broadcasts, subsequently relayed also in the regional languages from Madras, Tiruchirapalli, Vijayawada and Kozhikode, were an invaluable aid to the voters and candidates in getting to know their duties and also their proper place in the election process.

Generally speaking, no restrictions were imposed on the holding of public meetings or the taking out of processions in connection with electioneering, except in the city of Madras where an order under Section 41 of the Madras City Police Act was enforced. In consequence, political parties intending to take out processions or wanting to hold meetings in the city had to obtain a licence from the Commissioner of Police. In the mofussil, no such order was found necessary as local orders usually under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code could be imposed in cases where the authorities feared any breach of the peace. In order to facilitate the use of microphones, sound amplifiers, etc. for purposes of propaganda, the government suspended up to 31st January 1952 Section 3(10) of the Madras Nuisance Act, 1889 in all areas in the state except certain specified talukas and Section 71(XV) of the Madras Police Act 1888 throughout the state except in the city of Madras. Political parties in any part of the state except in a few specified towns were thus able to press into use sound amplifiers etc. without obtaining a permit from the district authorities; except in two places where the order of exemption in respect of the sections mentioned in the said two Acts did not operate. Care, however, was taken to see that applications for permits in the places where such permits were necessary were disposed of with the least possible delay.

### *Congress Party*

Of all the parties in the political arena, the Congress which was the party in power in the state was the earliest to enter the fray. The election manifesto of the Congress adopted at the Bangalore meeting of the All-India Congress

Committee in July, 1951, was the basis on which the party appealed to the electorate. As early as June 10, 1951, the Tamil Nad Pradesh Congress Committee had appointed six members to the Pradesh Election Committee to select candidates from Tamil Nad for the general elections. The need was felt for the Congressmen in the state to close their ranks and to fight the election as a single unbroken phalanx. From statements made by leaders of the party in Tamil Nad from time to time, the impression that one got was that the party had no doubts about its hold upon the people or its ability to emerge victorious in the general elections. The feeling, however, was strong in the Congress circles in the state that only the best type of men should be chosen by the party as candidates. Individual Congress leaders including some Ministers were found exploring the possibility of an election alliance between the Congress and the Muslim League, though such an alliance never came into being. The Working Committee of the Madras State Jamiat-e-ulema called upon the Muslims of the state (by a resolution adopted by it on October 14, 1951) to rally round the Congress banner.

The list of candidates having been approved by the Central Election Committee of the Congress in November 1951, meetings began to be held all over the state to canvass support. Speakers on the party platform, while commending to the electorate the party programme and party candidates, did not fail to draw pointed attention to the role of the Congress in the task of winning freedom for the country and the record of its varied achievements while in office since August 1947, on the one hand, and to the dangers lurking in a possible Communist victory on the other. The Congress alone, it was claimed, could give a proper lead to the country; other parties might make promises but they had no definite programmes. Wherever necessary, meaningful explanations of the scope of the election manifesto were given by party candidates and their supporters. The number of meetings held by the Congress party all over the state in support of its candidates was legion. Everywhere the party's spokesmen appealed to the voters not to make the mistake of voting for the Communists, for if the Communists came to power there would be an end

of liberty and freedom of the individual. In the interest of stable government, they asked them to vote for the Congress.

Dissatisfaction with the method of selection of Congress candidates for the general election led to the resignations from the Congress organization of a few important party members. One such person was Shri. D. S. Adimoolam, President of the Tirunelveli District Board, who resigned as a protest against what he called the most unjust and quite unsatisfactory manner adopted in the selection of candidates in the district for the state Assembly and the House of the People. Shri. P. K. V. Thiagaraja Reddiar of Namakkal, of the Salem District Board and A.I.C.C., also resigned from the party for the same reason.

#### *The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party*

The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, like the Congress, began its electioneering quite early. Like the Congress, the K.M.P.P. had separate Pradesh Committees for the several linguistic areas in the state for the purposes of general elections. And the District Committees in these several areas were to send up lists of candidates seeking a Praja Party ticket, out of which the final choice of candidates to be put up was to be made by the Central Committee. The leader of the party Acharya J. B. Kripalani, in the course of a press conference at Madras on August 18, 1951, indicated that the Praja Party was not likely to enter into any electoral alliance with the Communist Party. In the words of the leader of the party, the main purpose of the K.M.P.P. was to put some life into the country and give the people hope of a bright future. The party stood for the realization of the Andhra state immediately with all Andhra districts under the jurisdiction of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee included within it, but without the Madras city. Shri. S. V. Ramamurthi, who stood on the party ticket, for election to the House of the People from Eluru Constituency, in the course of an address at the Ranade Hall at Mylapore on December 9, said that the K.M.P.P. had for its main objectives good and honest administration and vigorous economic development of

the country. In the South Arcot District, the K.M.P.P. came to an understanding with the Tamil Nad Toilers' Party under which, by not setting up candidates on its own ticket, it agreed to support candidates set up by the T.N.T. Party; and in Malabar, contrary to certain indications, it joined hands with the Communist Party in an election alliance.

### *The Communist Party of India*

The Communist Party of India began its political fusillade in the Madras state simultaneously with the other parties. A convention of the Tamil Nad Communist Party was held on June 9, 1951 to discuss the election manifesto of the party and the formation of a United Front to oppose the Congress in the elections. Quite early in its election campaign the party's General Secretary, Shri. A. K. Ghosh, visited Madras. In a bid for the support of the electorate, he announced that the party stood for the formation of linguistic states. Shri. S. A. Dange, who visited Madras towards the end of October, 1951, emphasized that the Communist Party would have no truce with communal parties like the Muslim League or the Jan Sangh. He justified the alliance between his party and the Dravida Kazhagam because, in his opinion, the latter was mainly a progressive party, not essentially a communal one.

### *The Dravida Kazhagam*

Shri. E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, leader of the Dravida Kazhagam, made a fervent appeal to the voters of Tamil Nad to vote for Communists only and not for Congress or for any other party. The Communist-Dravida Kazhagam alliance, however, did not prove enduring because of internal cleavages within the Kazhagam itself. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Tiruchi District Dravida Kazhagam on December 14, 1951, a resolution was passed that since the Communists in their organ, the *Jana Sakti* were propagating the view that they did not support Dravidastan, the Kazhagam should not lend its support to the Communist candidates in the general election. That the offer of support originally

made by the Kazhagam to the Communists was subsequently withdrawn was announced by Shri P. Jeevanandam, Communist leader, at a meeting held at Madras three days later. On the same day that the resolution mentioned above was passed at Tiruchi, Shri. Annathurai, leader of the Progressive Dravida Kazhagam said in a Conference of the Kazhagam in the city that while his organisation was "genuinely communist" in its ideals, it would not enter into any alliance with the Communist Party during the elections, because the Communists had refused to sign the pledge that they would work for Dravidastan if returned to power. *Despite these authoritative statements made by the leaders of the two parties, the Communist organ, Crossroads (dated December 28, 1951) could still speak of an alliance between the two parties and of the Kazhagam's support to the Communist candidates.*

### *The Hindu Mahasabha*

The President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. N. B. Khare, came down to Madras in October 1951 to explain the position of his party in relation to the general election. He denied that the Sabha was either a communal or a fascist organisation, but admitted that he stood for Akhand Hindustan and that the Sabha was not inclined to take the protestations of Muslims who remained in India after partition at their face value. He said that if he came to power, he would support the formation of linguistic states. To Dravidastan, if it meant cutting away of the Dravidian speaking regions from Bharat, he was, however, uncompromising in his opposition. Judging from the results of the elections, it is evident that the Hindu Mahasabha had very little following in the state. Both the candidates it had set up for the House of the People failed and also forfeited their deposits. Between them, they polled only 15,553 votes. For the state Assembly, it had entered 9 candidates and all 9 failed, forfeiting their deposits and together getting only 24,617 votes, or 0.12% of the total valid votes polled.



### *The Socialist Party*

The Socialist Party's campaign of electioneering began with the visit to the city of Madras in August, 1951 of Shri. Asoka Mehta, General Secretary of the party. The programme of the party as outlined by him at a public meeting at Madras on August 12, 1951, included, among others, the widest possible re-distribution of land and the nationalisation and socialisation of the country's industries, banks, etc. His appeal to the people for support for his party was based on his claim that his party was the political party that was primarily concerned with the economic ills of the country. In the wake of Shri. Asoka Mehta, the leader of the party, Shri. J. P. Narayan himself visited the state during September 1951 in an attempt to rally the electorate round the socialist banner. In October 1951, yet another socialist leader, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia visited the state. The promise made by the Socialist candidates at their meetings was that in the event of their being returned to power, the Socialists would liquidate feudalism and establish socialism. In the words of Shri. K. Jagadeesan, Socialist candidate for the State Assembly from the Triplicane constituency, the Socialist Party would be "the golden mean between the Congress conservatism and the Communist anarchism." To Shri T. S. Ramanujam, Socialist candidate for the House of the People from the Madras city Parliamentary constituency, the Socialist programme was the real Sarvodaya Programme of Mahatma Gandhi. In the course of a letter to the editor of the *Hindu* published on December 9, 1951, Shri. T. S. Ramanujam had occasion to complain that his party was finding it very difficult to get places for holding public meetings and for presenting its platform to the electorate as most places in the city of Madras were being regarded by the police as unfit for such purposes.

### *The Scheduled Castes Federation*

The Madras state Scheduled Castes Federation, which is a branch of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, in putting up candidates for the Scheduled Castes reserved seats

laid special emphasis upon the need to abolish prohibition, which the Congress in power had introduced in the state; and, in respect of national and international problems, the party (in the words of its leader in the state, Shri. N. Sivaraj) stood for a "realistic" approach.

## THE CAMPAIGN

Among all the states in India, Madras had the largest number of local parties and Independents fighting the battle of the general election, and naturally enough the issues stressed by party and independent spokesmen in the course of electioneering were of a bewildering variety. For the parliamentary election, ten All-India parties and five local or state parties together accounted for 192 out of a total of 293 candidates set up. The number of independents was 101. In the case of the state Assembly election, 12 All-India parties together with 5 local or state parties accounted for 1,005 out of a total of 1,675 candidates set up. The Independent candidates for the election to the Assembly numbered 670. The programme placed before the state electorate and the issues stressed by the All-India parties were of the same pattern as in every other state except for slight variations required by varying local conditions.

The appeal made by the local parties, and also by the Independent candidates, was essentially of a local or state colour reflecting issues which had been a pre-occupation of the political life of the state in the recent past. Independent spokesmen, apart from the Independent candidates, sought to educate the electorate at every possible turn on their duties and responsibilities in relation to the impending general elections. Symbolic of the importance of the voter was a conference called the Tamil Nad Voters Conference which met on September 13, 1951 at Madras. At the Conference, the speakers generally exhorted the voters to exercise their franchise in favour of proper and deserving candidates. In Madras city there were many occasions, during the preparatory stage before the elections, when candidates of different parties were brought together on a common platform and asked

to explain their respective programmes so that the public might have an opportunity to judge the relative merits of each. Finally on December 16, 1951, a general discussion on the election manifestos of all parties was held at the same place. In the course of the discussion, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya said that the Congress stood before the electorate not only as a great party but also in the position of a person in the dock put on his own defence. Shri. A. R. V. Achar, speaking for the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, criticised the Congress for not having done any tangible work to redeem its pledges to the electorate. Shri. T. S. Ramanujam explained the Socialist Party's programme and said that his party stood for bringing down the prices to the 1939 level and for bringing more land under cultivation and insuring self-sufficiency in the matter of food. The spokesman of the Communist Party, Shri. M. R. Venkataraman, drew special attention to the basic feature of his party's manifesto, namely, taking over of foreign capital in the country and also of land belonging to the feudals, without compensation. Shri. V. Ramamurthy of the research department of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee defended the Congress indicating the progressive measures that it proposed to carry out if it were returned to power again and the sense of responsibility that it showed by refusing to indulge in extravagant promises. The point of view of the independents was presented by Shri. A. V. Raman. To him an issue of utmost significance was whether water supply should be given the highest priority or not in the state. He insisted that cross-benchers were necessary in any legislature for the promotion of intelligent and informed discussion.

Congress candidates for election to the Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in the city spared no efforts to impress upon the voters the need to vote Congress because the Congress was the only party which could run the administration of the country and tackle the various problems confronting the people. Shri. T. T. Krishnamachari at an election meeting held on December 20, 1951 at Madras appealed to the people not to be too harsh upon the Congress Government for the state's economic ills, particularly as they

were not man-made but due to the failure of rains continually for five years. Shri. S. Ramanathan of the Republican Party said that his party stood for the dissolution of the Congress. In thinking that for the establishment of true democracy in India defeat of the Congress constituted the first step, Shri. S. Ramakrishnan of the Communist Party was in agreement with the *Republican Party's* spokesman.

The Praja Party, in the course of its electioneering, held out to the electorate the promise that if returned to power it would strive for abolition of controls and rationing and that it would not pursue prohibition. Its party leaders were never tired of insisting that all the misery and the distress among the people in the state were the result of Congress rule. Congress Government in the state was a horse that everybody beat, parties opposed to it as well as Independent candidates. Shri. P. Balasubramaniam, Independent candidate for Parliament from the city, said that if he was returned to the legislature he would fight for the establishment of Dravidanad and against what he called the domination of North Indians over the South in the economic field. The Hindu Mahasabha's candidate for Parliament, Shri. V. Srinivasa Iyer, said that he was opposed to the Hindu Code Bill and the Hindu Religious Endowments Acts—the latter a state act governing Hindu Religious endowments—and cow-slaughter. The claim of the Socialist Party was that it was the only party opposing the Congress with a positive programme of its own. Environmental sanitation was the main plank in the electioneering of Shri. A. V. Raman, an Independent candidate to the State Assembly from the Mylapore constituency. Another independent candidate for the state Assembly from Triplicane said that he was contesting the elections not because he was opposed to the Congress ideal, but because of the wrong choice of candidates made by the Congress.

The last few days of December 1951 witnessed an increase in the tempo of electioneering all over the state. Shri. B. Shiva Rao, Congress candidate for Parliament from South Canara (South) constituency, in the course of an address at Manjeswar on December 27, 1951, characterised the parties

opposing the Congress as mushroom parties. Shri. N. G. Ranga, leader of the Krishikar Lok Party, said that the main issue was the immediate formation of the Andhra state. Raja Sir M. A. Muthia Chettiar, Independent candidate from Tirupattur constituency, exhorted the voters at Neduvayal on December 26, 1951 to return the Congress to power, for he said the Congress alone could deliver the goods.

The Communists were untiring in their efforts to persuade the electorate to vote against the Congress, characterising the Congress as undemocratic and corrupt. They denounced the Congress Five-Year Plan because from their point of view, it would only perpetuate capitalism and the domination of Britain and America in the economic and political spheres of the country. In the city of Madras, the Congress point of view was explained best by Shri. T. T. Krishnamachari in the several public meetings that he addressed on election eve. To him "the Congressmen were socialists in the sense that they wanted social justice, that the poor should be uplifted, untouchability should go, and the backward classes should no longer be backward." According to Shri. Rajamannar, Forward Bloc candidate, his party stood for the establishment of a socialist republic. Independent spokesmen could be heard adding their voices to those of the candidates whom they supported in all public meetings arranged in connection with the electioneering. An independent spokesman, Shri. R. V. Krishna Iyer, speaking in support of an Independent candidate on January 8th, 1952, at Mylapore, is reported to have said that "in a country like India where party politics had not crystallised the voters should judge candidates by their individual merits and not by the party to which they belonged." Prohibition happened to be the sole plank on which the election was fought by an Independent candidate from the Thousand Lights Constituency for the State Legislature!

The All-India parties, like the Congress, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India, entered the field of the general elections in the state sufficiently early, each with its own election manifesto outlining the programme of the party for the country as a whole. The local parties, in parti-

cular, did not take the trouble of issuing manifestos worth the name, with the result that their programmes and policies have to be understood piecemeal from the speeches made by their leaders or individual spokesmen. The Research Section of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee got into touch with the headquarters of the Conservative and Labour parties in England and, on the model of the election posters received from them, designed as many as eight posters referring to particular aspects of Congress' record in office in the state. This propaganda effort was unique. Rendered into English, the captions of some of the posters read as follows:

"To foster freedom we vote Congress"

"Why hesitate, come along, let us vote for Congress which abolished drink."

"For our future vote Congress."

"To get remuneration according to work, we are voting Congress."

It also published two newsprint posters, the first showing the Congress symbol entitled "This is the Congress Symbol" and the other carrying a bust of Shri. Nehru and entitled "Vote Congress."

Apart from these specially designed posters which were distributed in large numbers all over Tamil Nad, the Tamil Nad Congress Committee also brought out four special leaflets in Tamil drafted by its research committee. These leaflets were entitled:

1. "Towards good life"—What Congress Governments will do (twenty points from the manifesto read with the Planning Commission Report)
2. "This is the road to Progress"—Congress shows the way
3. "Why the Country needs the Congress"
4. "Congress which fought for Freedom fights also for Prosperity"

The Andhra Pradesh Congress Election Bureau was not any whit behind the Tamil Nad Congress Committee in its attempt to influence the voters on behalf of the candidates and to educate the candidates themselves. Its Election Infor-

mation Bureau began its efforts by the issue of a newsprint poster to popularise the Congress symbol. And in a series of circular letters, it conveyed necessary facts about the election to the Congress candidates in the several constituencies within the jurisdiction of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee.

The propaganda material put out by the Tamil Nad Congress Committee, however, surpassed in originality and ingenuity all that the Andhra Pradesh Committee or any other party organization or individuals had managed to produce and disseminate in the state.

## THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

Of all the states in India, Madras has had the most virile, alert and outspoken Fourth Estate. It consists of the following leading Dailies: *The Hindu*, *The Madras Mail* and *The Indian Express* published in English; and *Swadeshamitran*, *Dina Mani*, *Andhra Patrika* and *Andhra Prabha* published in the regional languages, not to speak of numerous others, some of them weeklies, whose appeal to the readers is particularist and not general. The role of the Fourth Estate in the recent General Elections has not by any means been negligible. In fact it played its part admirably well in the preparatory period before the elections, during the election period itself and in the difficult days that followed till the formation of the Ministry, by careful reporting, gentle persuasiveness and on occasions also by fearless criticism. Partisan papers were no doubt uncompromising in their criticism of opposing parties and candidates. A notable example of such a type of paper was the communist *Jana Sakti*. The very captions of its articles "Lordlords—the demons that dwell in Tanjore District," or "Face either a tiger in the land or a crocodile in the water" are illustrative of the tactics that it adopted to influence its readers.

On the whole the Press enthusiastically cooperated with the government in giving publicity to the arrangements made and to the orders issued by it in connection with the elections. In their coverage of the elections, our leading news-

papers took enormous pains to see that nothing inaccurate or misleading was purveyed to their readers. From time to time, through their editorials, they sought to educate the voters and made periodical surveys of the situation. (In their readings of the political barometer, our dailies were not always correct because they too were swayed by their prepossessions.)

*The Hindu* on the whole maintained its tradition of detached outlook on day to day developments on the political chessboard. *The Indian Express* did not disguise its avowed sympathies for the Congress. A particular feature of the *Indian Express* was "points" regarding candidates elected which regularly appeared in its columns following the election results. The points specially emphasized were the public and national service and political work of the candidate besides those relating to the candidate's religion, caste and the number of votes polled. While *The Mail* was outspoken in its criticism of the Congress in harness, particularly for its introduction of total prohibition in the state, in its coverage of the election campaign and of the actual voting at different constituencies it did a better job than most other dailies. Of the papers coming from outside the state, the communist *Crossroads*\* took a particularly keen interest in the elections in Madras, obviously because of the Communist success in several constituencies in our state. It had a feature entitled "Personalities" under which it sought to give details of the biographies of their top-ranking candidates.

## POLLING

The number of voters going to the polls was nearly 27 millions, almost three and a half times the electorate entitled to vote in connection with election of members to the Legislative Assembly in 1945-46. This difference between the total electorate under the old Constitution and new is in itself a sufficient index of the relative difficulties involved in the

\* The *Crossroads* was published during the elections at Bombay, but subsequently with the transfer of the Communist Headquarters to Madras, the paper also began to appear from Madras.



arrangements for the two elections.†

The first stage of the General Elections in Madras began on January 2, 1952, on which date a sixth of the electorate went to the polls. On the first day of the election there was delay in the matter of starting the poll ranging from fifteen minutes to one hour in several booths. Accordingly, in all booths where there was a delay, due to diverse causes, the closing time was also correspondingly delayed. In most constituencies women voters evinced great enthusiasm. There was very brisk polling, generally speaking, in all booths in the early part of the day, and polling slackened as the day advanced. By 4-30 p.m. many booths were empty. The voters on the whole maintained perfect discipline. There are numerous cases, of the very old and the infirm having waited patiently in the queue to exercise their franchise. A blind octogenarian waited more than an hour in the queue at Thirumanjolai in the Sivaganga constituency before he could enter the polling booth and the polling officer helped him to cast his vote according to his voice. Voters experienced some difficulty in places where two polling stations happened to be located side by side. Some of them got into the wrong station. In one booth in the city of Madras, owing to inadequate tutoring, some women voters refused to surrender their identity cards before putting the ballot papers into the ballot boxes. They insisted upon putting the cards also into the boxes and it took a good deal of persuasion on the part of the officers before they could be made to desist from doing it.

At a booth in Thiruvottiyur High Road in the city of

† Madras state includes besides its territory on the mainland a few scattered islands off its west coast like the Amindivi, the Laccadives and the Minicoy. They formed part of the Chevayur Assembly constituency and the Kozhikode Parliamentary Constituency—both single-member constituencies of the Malabar district. The conduct of the general elections in these islands presented certain administrative difficulties to solve which special arrangements had to be made. A steamer chartered for the purpose carried across to and brought back from the islands the polling and police personnel and equipment that they required together with such candidates or their agents as desired to contact the islanders in connection with electioneering. The electorate on the islands numbering about nine thousand went to the polls on the 12th January, 1952.

Madras, women standing in the queue when asked why they had come to vote could give no answer except that they had been told that they were enfranchised and therefore had come to exercise their new-found right. In the same booth, there were a large number of handloom-weavers who said that they wanted to elect a representative who would ensure them an adequate supply of yarn. Railway employees who accounted for a large number of votes in this booth said that they were voting for the party that would fight to improve their pay and prospects. The unemployed voter was out to change the administration which he blamed for his miserable plight. Some voters in another part of the city when questioned said that they had come to the booth to effect a change in the administration. That the illiterate adult voter while undertaking a political task could not help associating in his mind the ballot box with sealed receptacles for offerings placed at doorsteps of temples was quite amusingly demonstrated when, during the counting of votes on January 17, 1952 in Salem Town constituency of the state Assembly, three packets of turmeric, a one rupee note, three one rupee coins, four anna coins and pice were found in the ballot boxes.

While the arrangements made by the government for the General Elections in Madras were, generally speaking satisfactory, owing to certain irregularities in the conduct of the elections, a fresh poll had to be ordered at certain polling booths in certain constituencies. In Ongole Parliamentary constituency at booth number two of Marripadu polling station, No. 465, one of the ballot boxes and its contents got damaged during transit, necessitating a fresh poll. A fresh poll had to be ordered in booths Nos. 1 and 2 of Atmakur polling station, No. 462, because of a mix-up of the ballot papers issued to the voters. Another case of irregularity which necessitated a fresh poll was the wrong pasting of symbols on the ballot boxes of two candidates at booth No. 4 of Addhangai polling station No. 51 in Ongole Assembly constituency. Wrong pasting of symbols on the ballot boxes led to repolling at two booths in each of several polling stations of the Cuddalore constituency for the Assembly. At booth No. 1 of polling station 268 in the same constituency, one

of the ballot boxes and its contents got damaged during transit with the result that a repoll had to be ordered in that particular booth. Ballot papers having been wrongly issued to voters fresh poll had to be ordered in booth No. 2 of Hosur polling station No. 245 and at booth No. 2 of Kallur polling station No. 167 in the Kallur Assembly constituency.

Another irregularity which called for a repoll was a mistake in the issue of the ballot papers of a particular series for the Assembly election in Mannargudi Assembly constituency at booth No. 1 of polling station No. 456. In the Mayuram Parliamentary constituency in polling station No 413 at booth No. 2, the correct symbol was not pasted on the box of the candidate and hence a repoll had to be ordered in the said booth. Repolling had to be ordered in seven polling stations in the Cuddalore Assembly constituency because of an error. It was discovered that the same symbol as for the general seat without a black circle was affixed to boxes belonging to Scheduled Castes' candidates. At Akkivedu polling station in the Nandyal House of the People constituency and the component Cumbum constituency, on January 19, 1952, two-hundred voters waiting from 1 p.m. with chits issued by the polling staff could not exercise their franchise as the presiding officer's supply of indelible ink had run out. These voters were allowed to exercise their vote on January 25, 1952.

In some cases Parliamentary voting papers were found in ballot papers of Assembly constituencies with the result that they had to be declared invalid. The polling officers at two booths in the Tekkai polling station having issued by mistake Parliamentary voting papers for the Assembly seat and vice-versa, repolling had to be ordered. On January 16, 1952 in the city of Madras an instance of tampering with the ballot boxes was detected where some voter had packed a roll of paper into the slit of one ballot box thus closing it. Repolling had to be held at Parpadi polling station of the double-member constituency of Thirumayam in Pudukkottai for the Assembly because for some time after the election started only one ballot paper was given to each voter instead of two.

In spite of instructions by official guides at every polling booth some voters had left their ballot papers over the ballot box instead of putting them into it; some had thrown them on the ground in the polling compartment. Polling at Velpannur at Nandikotur, Kurnool district, had to be abandoned on January 16, 1952, because a mob attacked the polling station and rushed inside through the window when the polling was in progress. In their excitement, seeing the disturbance, the women in the waiting queue got unnerved and rushed into the women's booth interrupting the polling. This was probably the only instance of the police on duty at a polling station being unable to cope with an emergent situation. Dissatisfaction with the government for its failure to locate a booth in their village found expression in the boycott of the booth at Panangulam, three miles away from their village, by the voters of Kothamangalam.

*Among illegal abuses of election procedure, impersonation was the most common. At the elections in the various constituencies in the city of Madras on January 16, 1952, seventeen cases of alleged impersonation of voters were reported and in all the cases the presiding officers handed over the offenders to the police. Behaving in a disorderly manner inside the polling station and walking out of the booth with the ballot papers were among other election offences.*

## THE CANDIDATES AND THE RESULTS

Adult franchise on the basis of which the general elections of 1951-1952 were held was indeed a powerful factor that was responsible for upsetting established party politics in the state. Congress, which had 165 out of 215 (or 77%) of the seats in 1945 in the state legislative Assembly under conditions of restricted franchise, was able to secure only 152 out of 375, or little over 40% of the seats.

In the case of the Congress, the responsibility for the selection of candidates for the House of the People and state Assembly was that of the respective Pradesh Committees. For 190 seats in the state Assembly and 38 seats in the House

of the People in the Tamil districts, the Tamil Nad Congress Committee received applications from 590 intending candidates. Among the candidates for the state Assembly were all the Ministers of Tamil Nad, save one, several Harijans and Muslims and ten women. Some applicant left it to the Tamill Nad Congress Committee to allot them either to the state Assembly or to the House of the People. A few of the sitting members of Parliament, however, signified a desire to change over to the state Assembly. For 38 seats in the House of the People, there were 67 applicants including some sitting members of Parliament and one woman, a Harijan. The Tamil Nad Pradesh Election Committee went round the districts interviewing the candidates before the final list was recommended to the High Command. In the choice of the candidates, the Tamil Nad Pradesh Election Board, in the words of its President, took care to see that 'people of integrity' alone were included in their list. Congress candidates for election from the various constituencies in the city of Madras were chosen by the Tamil Nad and the Andhra Pradesh Election Committee sitting together. The Tamil Nad Congress Election Committee in its list of final recommendations chose to include the names of just a few Congressmen who, however, had not applied to the Committee. Non-Congressmen were in no case recommended by the Pradesh Committees, though cases are not wanting of candidates selected having declined the Congress ticket. At a meeting held on December 4, 1951 at Madras under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, speakers condemned the nominations made by the Tamil Nad Election Committee as having been actuated by communal and sub-communal considerations.

The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee and the Tamil Nad Congress Committee levied from each of the candidates (other than Harijan and Backward Class candidates) selected for the state Assembly and for the House of the People a fee of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 respectively. While the Committees paid the deposit which each candidate had to pay under the Representation of the People Act, the amount left over was to be utilised by the Congress organization in the

state for augmenting its resources. The insistence on the part of the Pradesh Committees of an application fee from candidates gave rise to the belief in some quarters that the organization was setting greater store on the candidates' monetary power to cope with the difficulties of the election campaign than on their record of public service. It must, however, be pointed out in fairness to the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee that it contributed a sum of Rs. 66,000 to 44 candidates contesting the general election on Congress tickets in Andhra Desa, each getting a share of Rs. 1000 to 2000.

The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee received 522 applications for 143 seats in the state Assembly and 78 for 28 seats in the House of the People. In certain Andhra districts there was a paucity of women candidates. In all only 16 women applied to the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee for being sponsored officially and there were no women applicants from the districts of Kurnool, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam.

The K.M.P.P. contested 31 seats for the House of the People and 147 for the state Assembly. The two leaders of the party in Andhra and Tamil Nad were generally responsible for the selection of candidates in their respective areas.

The Socialists entered a slightly larger number (164) of candidates, for the state Assembly than the K.M.P.P. and only 20 for the House of the People. Their list included all the prominent members of the party in the state like the Raja of Vizianagaram Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai, Dr. K. B. Menon, Shri. T. S. Ramanujam and Shri. M. S. Appa Rao.

The Communist Party set up 16 candidates for the House of the People and 131 for the state Assembly among whom were well-known members of the party, some of whom were still underground at the time their nominations were filed. Special mention might be made of Messrs. T. Nagi Reddi, M. Hanumantha Rao, G. Joseph, P. Ramamurthi, P. Jeevanandam, M. Kalyanasundaram, A. K. Gopalan and K. Anandan Nambiar. In Tamil Nad the Communist Party of India contested 55 seats for the state Assembly and 5 for the House

of the People. Besides this, the Communist Party of India supported 25 Independents in the same area. In Malabar, it entered into an election alliance with the K.M.P.P. under which they jointly set up 23 candidates for the state Assembly and 6 for the House of the People. Out of these, the Communist candidates accounted for 14 out of 23 for the state Assembly and 2 out of 6 for the House of the People. In Andhra Desa, the Communist Party of India set up 9 candidates for the House of the People and 61 for the state Assembly.

The Scheduled Castes Federation set up 9 candidates for the House of the People and 38 for the state Assembly. All their candidates for the House of the People were defeated, 5 of them also forfeiting their deposits; while 2 candidates were elected to the state Assembly.

The Hindu Mahasabha set up 2 candidates for the House of the People and 10 for the state Assembly. All the candidates for both the House of the People and Assembly not only lost the seats, but also lost their deposits.

The Ram Rajya Parishad fared no better than the Hindu Mahasabha, 3 candidates that they set up for the House of the People and 1 for the state Assembly having forfeited their deposits.

The Forward Bloc (M) entered 6 candidates for the state Assembly and 5 for the House of the People. The party won 3 seats for the Assembly and 1 for the House of the People.

The Forward Bloc (R) set up 5 candidates for the House of the People and 1 for the state Assembly. But all of them were defeated.

The Krishikar Lok Party contested 19 seats for the House of the People and 63 seats for the state Assembly, and won 15 seats in the case of the Assembly alone.

The Tamil Nad Toilers' Party set up 7 candidates for the House of the People and 34 for the state Assembly and won 4 seats for Parliament and 19 seats for the Assembly.

Another local party confined to the Tamil Nad, the Commonweal Party, contested and won 3 seats for the House of the People and annexed 6 out of 13 seats that it contested

for the state Assembly. The one candidate who entered for the election to Parliament on the Justice Party ticket was defeated and out of 9 seats for the state Assembly which it contested, it could claim only 1.

The Madras State Muslim League contested 1 seat for the House of the People and 13 seats for the state Assembly respectively and won the 1 Parliamentary seat and 5 Assembly seats.

The Ram Rajya Parishad and the Republican Party both lost 2 seats that they contested for the House of the People. They and the All India Agriculturists' Union and the All-India Bharatiya Jan Sangh also lost all the seats that they contested in the elections to the state Assembly.

Independent candidates contested 55 seats for the House of the People and 306 seats for the state Assembly and won 15 seats in the case of Parliament and 62 seats in the case of the Assembly.

A notable feature of the results of the general elections to the state Assembly has been the disparity between the strength of the representation of parties in the House and their share of the votes. The Congress got for 35.05% of the votes, 40% of the representation in the Assembly. For 6.58% of the votes the Socialists got only 3.47% of the seats. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party secured 9.3% of the seats for only 8.82% of the votes. The Krishikar Lok Party's record showed that it had annexed 4% of the seats for only 3.1% of the votes. The Independents accounted for 24.2% of the votes polled but they got only 17.20% of the seats. Both the Socialists and the Independents got far less number of seats than was warranted by the votes that they polled. The Congress' representation in the Assembly is not very much in excess of what their votes would justify. But the Communists' gain was undoubtedly very much in excess of what they would have been entitled to under a system of proportional representation.

In respect of the elections to the House of the People, the Congress obtained 46.6% of the seats for about 36.7% votes only. The Communists with 9.04% votes polled secured 10.6% of the seats. In the case of the other parties and



the Independents, the percentage of seats secured, generally speaking, fell short of the percentage of votes polled by them. The Socialists with 5% of votes got only 2.6% of the seats. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party with 10% of votes got only 8% of seats and the Independents with 23.1% of votes got 20% of the seats. As in the case of the elections to the state Assembly, in the case of elections to the House of the People also, the Congress and the Communists obtained representation definitely in excess of what they would have been eligible for under a system of proportional representation.

## WOMEN CANDIDATES

In the General Elections of 1952, women as a whole fared very badly. For one thing, the number of women candidates was very small. For the House of the People their number was only 6, 3 of whom had Congress labels. All the Socialist, K.L.P. and K.M.P. women candidates were defeated. Of the three Congress women-candidates, 2 were returned, Shrimati Ammu Swaminathan from Dindigul constituency and Shrimati Maragatham Chandrasekharan from Tiruvallur (rural). For the state Assembly, there were 19 women candidates. Of these, 7 were Congress, 3 Socialist, 7 Independent, 1 Justice Party and 1 Scheduled Castes Federation. Of these only 2 were successful both being of the Congress. As many as 8 women candidates out of 19 forfeited their deposits. There is, thus, no doubt that from the point of view of representation in the legislature, women fared better under the 1935 Act which gave them reserved seats besides allowing them to stand for general seats. The new state Assembly has only 2 women members as against 10 in the old.

## THE REGIONAL ASPECT

The district of Vizagapatam returned no Congress candidate. The largest number of Communist Party of India candidates came from Krishna and Guntur districts, 10 from each. Both the districts are bordering on Telengana which

for a considerable time was a communist pocket. The K.L.P. has showed itself to be confined exclusively to the Telugu speaking areas of the state. Every district except East Godavari, West Godavari, Guntur and S. Canara, threw up Independents. The K.M.P. showed a larger hold upon the Telugu speaking areas than on the Tamil districts. The entire quota of Muslim League members came from the Malabar district, the home of the Moplahs. The Commonweal Party confined itself entirely to the district of North Arcot. The T.N.T., too, is essentially a Tamil Nad party though its ramifications, unlike in the case of the Commonweal, are found extending to Salem, Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts. The stronghold of the party, however, is South Arcot district where it won 13 out of 19 seats.

Election results to the state Assembly viewed from the background of the linguistic division of the state reveal certain interesting facts. The first is that the Communist Party of India captured 27% of the total seats from Andhra Desa; 24.1% seats from Malabar; only 6.8% from Tamilnad and none from South Canara. Next to Andhra Desa, their stronghold was in Malabar. Another fact revealed by the elections is that the largest number of the K.M.P. contingent in the state Assembly hailed from Andhra Desa, and that their weakest hold was in Tamilnad where they polled only 3.7% of the total votes. The third fact is what may be called the rout of the Socialists. Next to the Congress, they entered the largest number of candidates, namely 164. All except 13 of the 164 were defeated. Yet another fact revealed is the decline in the influence and authority of the Congress in the state. In the 1945 election, it secured more than 77% of the seats; in 1952 only a little over 40%.

## POST-ELECTION REFLECTIONS

In the elections to the state Assembly, there is no doubt that the Congress suffered not inconsiderable reverses, although it came out as the largest single party. Practically all the important Ministers were defeated, including the Chief Minister. In many quarters the verdict of the electorate was

interpreted as a repudiation of the Congress Ministry that had been in power. The causes leading to the reverses of the Congress were many and varied. Many Congressmen felt that prohibition, which the Congress Party had introduced to save the poor from the 'bogs and the precipices' of the drink evil, was responsible in a large measure for their defeat. Again, according to an analysis by the *Hindu* (Sunday, February 3, 1952), utter disregard of public opinion, capricious ministerial and administrative policies, irritating political interference with administration at all levels, quarrels between rival groups within the party in the legislature resulting in three ministries in the course of four years and linguistic factions, were some of the possible causes which led to the Congress decline in the state. Communism, communalism and casteism were other contributory causes.

The decline of the numerical strength of the Congress in the state legislature must in part be ascribed to the depletion caused in the ranks of the party by the defection of quite a large number of Congress members who had joined the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. Tried Congressmen of many years' standing were found contesting as Independents because of their failure to obtain Congress tickets. The special report on the general election in Andhra presented to the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee by its General Secretary stated that differences between the Pradesh Congress Committee and the ministerialists were, in no small measure, responsible for the reverses of the party. The Congress had lost touch with the masses, especially agricultural labour. From being a rural party, the Congress while in office had tended to drift towards the city, with the result that their leaders lost their hold on the country-side.

The ground lost by the Congress was gained by the Communists. In Tanjore, they actively supported the Kisan movement, originally inspired by Congressmen. In Andhra Desa four years of underground work enabled them to win agricultural labour, which constitutes 25% of the total population of the area, to their side. The promise of five acres of land and a cow to every individual, no doubt, caught the imagination of the landless in Andhra. The report presented

to the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee says that prohibition had become unpopular with the labouring classes; the procurement policy of the government also was extremely unpopular, the officials having been proved to be partial to rich land-lords while the lower strata of producers were treated with undue harshness. The poorer land-lords felt that they were discriminated against in the matter of distribution of agricultural implements, fertilisers, etc. In fact the position of the Congress on the eve of the elections was such that any and every shortcoming of the administration was laid at its door. A point on which the report lays special emphasis is that "In India, when Congress took over office, no attempt was made to impress on the people that the feeling of being against the government must give place to the realisation that they must support the government and help it in pushing through its policies." According to Shri. Kamaraja Nadar, President of the Tamil Nag Congress Committee, Congressmen had taken victory too much for granted. On the eve of the general election, the Congress in Madras represented a house that was divided against itself. Again, where there was one party previously, there were now three: the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Krishikar Party and the Congress itself. A tour of the polling booths showed that the literate people, the middle class, who constituted the main support to the Congress in the 1937 and 1945 elections, were apathetic in the matter of the exercise of their right to vote. They did not go to the polls in large numbers, as the newly enfranchised workers in the towns or the peasants in the villages did. Among the middle class voters, generally speaking, women out-numbered men at the polling booths.

Communist successes were greatest in the areas adjoining Telengana. Their successes elsewhere were sporadic. In Malabar 25% of the seats went to them. Where they had been actively at work for some years as in coastal Andhra-desa, in Malabar and Tanjore in Tamilnad, their electoral victories were not entirely unexpected. Where the Communist Party has won (and this holds good for both elections to Parliament and to the state legislature) a fairly high percentage of women are found to have voted. Except in five

constituencies, in all the other Assembly constituencies in which the Communist Party was successful the percentage of women who voted to the total women electorate was above 50 and in some cases it reached even up to 78 and a little more. In no Assembly constituency, which returned a Communist Party candidate did the percentage of votes cast to total votes fall below 50. Accordingly, one infers that the electorate in the constituencies that have returned Communist candidates has been politically more conscious than in other constituencies, or that Communist electioneering methods have been responsible for drawing to the polling booth a larger number of voters than those of other parties. Here it must be pointed out that the highest percentage of those who voted to the total electorate (viz., 87.13%) and the highest percentage of women who voted to the total number of women voters (viz., 86.64%) were recorded in the Assembly constituency of Karaikudi which returned a Congress candidate. Ramanathapuram constituency from which a Congress candidate was returned to the Assembly recorded the highest percentage of men who voted to the total number of men voters, i.e. 91.09. In the case of Parliamentary constituencies, Gudivada which returned a Communist Party candidate holds the record for the percentage of the total votes polled to the total electorate; the percentage of men who voted to the total men voters; and the percentage of women who voted to the total number of women voters, viz., 78.38, 79.75 and 77.00 respectively.

## THE LEGISLATORS

The average age of the members of the Congress Party in the House of the People is 45.85, which is slightly higher than the average for the party's representatives in the state Assembly. The average age of the K.M.P.P. representatives in the House of the People from Madras is the highest for any party representing Madras in that House, i.e. 49.6. The Independent members from the Madras state in the House of the People have an average of 43.4 years and the Communist Party of India 38.0.

From the point of view of the presence in their midst of persons with previous experience of legislative work either at the Provincial or the Central level the parties represented in the legislative Assembly show wide divergencies. Among the 152 Congress members, 17 are former members of the state Legislative Assembly, 3 of the state Legislative Council and 5 of Parliament. The 62 Independents can claim only 2 former M.L.As. in their midst. The members of the Communist Party of India numbering 62 have only 1 former M.L.A. in their ranks. The K.M.P.P., with a total strength of 35, has 2 former members of the state Assembly and 1 of the state Legislative Council. Five representatives of the Muslim League include 1 former M.L.A. and 1 former M.L.C. Of all the various parties in the state, barring the S.C.F. which has only two representatives, the Communist Party of India has the lowest average age. The Independents whose average age is 40.38 can count amongst them quite a few who can claim experience in the field of local government or co-operative movement and who were till recently members of the Congress.

The members of the Congress Party in the state legislature represent a fair cross-section of the society in the state; they include men drawn from various strata of society and from various professions: lawyers, doctors, teachers, businessmen, farmers, landlords and others. Most of them are tried members of the Congress organization, with a record of sacrifice of no mean order made in the course of the country's freedom struggle. Quite a few amongst the members of the Communist Party in the Assembly are old-time Congressmen who, drifting towards the left, finally landed themselves in communism. The younger members of the party, however, represent a class of people who took to communism without any previous apprenticeship in any other political organization.

## MINISTRY-MAKING

The difficulty which seemed to handicap the Congress Party in the state Assembly for the moment was its failure to produce a leader who could inspire the people and win

their confidence. Without a proper leader who could undertake the responsibility of forming the government the party was at a loss to know what to do. A person chosen had to be acceptable to the members of the party in the legislature and at the same time had to possess a political stature that would draw unto him a sufficient number of non-Congress legislators. Such a person was Shri. C. Rajagopalachari, Chief Minister of the First Congress Government in Madras under the 1935 Act, the last of the Governors-General of India and till lately member of the Union Executive. He had, however, retired from politics and the question was whether he could at all be persuaded to come out of his political seclusion in the interests of the Congress Party and of stable government in the state. On March 31, 1952, his name figured in a list of four persons nominated by the Governor under Article 171(3)(e) to be members of the Madras Legislative Council. Already on Saturday, the 29th of March, approach was made to him by the Congress Party in the state legislature to take up its leadership. His nomination to the Legislative Council having been announced there was no need to find a safe constituency for him, should he consent to accept the offer made by the Congress Party.

Shri. Rajagopalachari having accepted the offer, not without a good deal of hesitation, the Congress Party in the legislature at its meeting held in the evening of March 31st, unanimously elected him its leader. Thereupon Shri. N. G. Ranga, leader of the K.L.P. promised his party's support to the Congress, should it strive to form a Government in the state. Many independents also welcomed the election of Shri. C. Rajagopalachari.

# 6 ORISSA

S. C. DASH  
Ravenshaw College, Cuttack

*Area: 60,136 sq. miles*  
*Population: 1,46,45,946*  
*Electorate: 77,08,161*

		House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats	.. ..	20	140
Constituencies	.. ..	16	107
Uncontested seats	.. ..	1	5
Contesting candidates	.. ..	57	517
Valid votes polled	.. ..	36,59,493	36,77,046
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies	.. ..	35.4	33.7

## INTRODUCTION

Orissa is one of the nine Part "A" states of the Indian Union. Orissa, it will be recalled, was separated from Bihar in 1936 and was made a separate administrative unit. It is one of the relatively less advanced states in the country. Communication facilities are inadequate, some of the mountainous parts being almost completely cut off from the rest of the state. Orissa has a very large population of Scheduled Tribes which reside mostly in remote areas of what formerly were princely states. Twenty-six princely states of various sizes, with a total population of about sixty lakhs, were located in the Orissa area prior to Independence. In 1948 these states were merged with Orissa, a move which increased both the size and population of the state considerably.



The main occupation of the majority of the people is agriculture. There are no major local industries, although the state has large and important deposits of mineral wealth. The Hirakud Dam when completed is expected to hasten industrialization and lead to an improvement in agricultural production.

Elections were not new to the people of Orissa. Some had voted in two previous elections (1937 and 1946). But these earlier elections were based on a restricted franchise. Therefore, a great majority of electors voted for the first time in the General Elections of 1951-52.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

More than 50% of the total population of Orissa had the right to vote in the elections. The electorate was composed of 77,08,161 voters of which more than 52% were women. They were to elect a state Legislative Assembly of 140 members and 20 members to the House of the People. Orissa's large Scheduled Tribe population had 28 seats reserved in the Assembly and 4 in the House of the People. 21 seats in the Assembly and 3 in the House of the People were reserved for the Scheduled Castes. For 20 seats in the House of the People there were 12 single-member and 4 double-member constituencies. For the state Assembly elections there were 107 constituencies, 74 being single-member and 33 double-member.

The electorate of more than seventy seven lakhs were provided with 1,748 polling stations and 2,102 polling booths. More than 5,000 people were engaged by the Election Officer of the state for conducting the elections. The cost to the state government alone was about Rs. 50 lakhs.

517 candidates belonging to eleven parties and 198 Independents contested the elections to the 135 seats of the state Assembly. Eleven Independents and 47 candidates belonging to six parties contested 19 seats for the House of the People. Five Congress candidates (three Scheduled Castes and two Scheduled Tribes) were elected unopposed to the state Assembly, and one Congress candidate was elected un-

opposed to the House of the People for a seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes.

Polling began on December 20, 1951 and continued for five weeks. Polling was not heavy. Only 34.56 per cent of the electorate voted in the elections to the Assembly, and 34.05 per cent voted in the elections to the House of the People. Polling was peaceful and orderly. The election machinery operated satisfactorily.

### ELECTION ALLIANCES

There was an alliance arranged between the Congress and the Adibasi Congress. In fact, the Secretary of the Adibasi Congress, Shri. Sonaram Soren, was subsequently appointed to the Cabinet as Minister of Tribal Welfare and Backward Classes Welfare. Further, there was an alliance made between the K.M.P.P., the Independent People's Party and the Ganatantra Parishad. The Forward Bloc (Ruikar) allied with the Independent People's Party.

These alliances had their own special significance. The Adibasis of the state were more closely allied previously with the Jharkhand Party led by Shri. Jaipal Singh (Bihar) than with the Congress. In order to turn the attention of the tribal people to the Congress, Shri. Lal Ranjit Singh Bariha, the Adibasi Minister in the old Congress Ministry, formed a separate organisation called the Adibasi Congress and created a common platform for all categories of Adibasis. This move was inspired by the Congress Party. Although the Adibasi Congress candidates functioned independently, they were sponsored (and to some extent financed) by the Congress. All successful candidates in the Adibasi Congress have joined the Congress Party.

The electoral alliance between the K.M.P.P., the Independent People's Party and the Ganatantra Parishad was based on common hostility to the Congress.

The leader of the Forward Bloc (Ruikar) Shri. Dibakar Pattnaik was a life-long supporter of the leader of the Independent People's Party, Pandit Nilkanth Das; on this basis both joined hands in this election.

## ELECTIONEERING

Literacy in the state of Orissa does not exceed 15%. For this reason visual propaganda was largely resorted to by all parties. All parties had their election manifestos published and also issued wall posters to advertise candidates and symbols. Hand-bills and appeals signed by prominent persons in each constituency (or of the state) were issued to influence the educated section of the electorate.

The Congress was the strongest and best organised party. Appeals were issued sporting the photograph of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President. Blocks of their symbols in many sizes were pasted on walls, trees and near all important places frequented by the people. Songs composed for castigating other parties and emphasizing the role of the Congress during freedom and after, with special stress on the Five Year Plan, were relayed through loud-speakers by peripatetic speakers; all forms of conveyance were used for this purpose. Congregations of people meeting for religious or social occasions were exploited for purposes of political propaganda. The Hirakud Dam project under construction in Orissa was utilised as a reply to charges of economic inaction on the part of Congress.

Leaders of all-Orissa importance were frequently on tour throughout the state and innumerable meetings were held and addressed by them. Even Shri. Nehru paid a flying visit to the state for two days on the eve of polling. Local volunteers were recruited and paid for organising street-corner and mahalla meetings and for making door-to-door approaches in the country-side. Big landlords and capitalists also were seen vying with each other in organising meetings or entertaining visiting parties. Processions preceded almost all meetings and pairs of yoked oxen (the Congress symbol) were prominently on the march in front of such processions. Appeals were made to the religious susceptibilities of the Hindu agriculturists on the ground that a vote for the "bull-oock box" was a vote for the "Gomata" (cow mother) and also for luxuriant crops. In some cases Gandhiji was said to have taken up residence in the boxes to watch the people

voting. This propaganda was responsible for illiterate voters walking to the booths with their own bullocks and offering "Bhog" (or lying prostrate) in front of the boxes before casting votes. Young children with yellow caps on head and with placards in hand were found marching, yelling and shouting Congress slogans. Typical slogans were:

- (1) "Jodi baladu ku vote Diantu" or "Vote for the yoked bullocks."
- (2) "Congress Party Hamara Party."
- (3) "Communist Party Russia ka dallal hai."
- (4) "Socialist Party punjipati ka dallal hai."
- (5) "Jais" for different national and state leaders.

This was positive electioneering. Negatively the propagandists attacked other parties. In old Orissa the Socialists, and in new Orissa (formed by the merger of the old Indian states) the Ganatantra Parishad, bore the brunt of the Congress attack. The Socialists were attacked for their alliance with capitalists for election funds, a reported electoral alliance with "Communists" in Bombay, opposition to the foreign policy of Nehru, a lack of unanimity among their leadership, want of sufficient candidates to take office when elected and for the continued threats of Shri. Jaiprakash Narayan to paralyse the Central Government by organising strikes among railway and postal workers. The socialist ideal was dubbed impracticable, more especially their demand for equal distribution of land and liberalisation of pay scales at lower levels. The Ganatantra Parishad was castigated as a "feudal party" because of the ex-rulers of former states taking the party's leadership. The Congress alleged that the princes were fighting for the restoration of their gadis. The people were asked to choose between the Congress (which stands for popular democracy) and the Parishad (which represents old autocratic regimes). The rulers were threatened with forfeiture of their privy purses because of their participation in politics.\*

\* It may be of interest to note, however, that Congress candidates included two ex-rulers, the Raja of Desapalla and the Rajmata of Ranapur, both of whom have found seats in the Government as Minister and Deputy Minister respectively. Even a big Zamindar, the Raja of Khariar, has a seat in the Government as a Deputy Minister.

The Socialist Party closely followed in the footsteps of the Congress. Next to Congress they had the strongest, most wide-spread and most durable organisation for electioneering purposes. They had been nursing their constituencies for three years. It was surprising that they did not achieve an electoral success commensurate with their general popularity and organisational strength. Even their state leader sustained defeat in the Assembly election and had to be elected to the Council of states. This was mostly due to the local reaction of all-India factors and a lack of finance. They formed a Young Socialists' League consisting of college and high school students who carried on the bulk of their propaganda without remuneration. Young men with red caps and red banners bearing the Socialist emblem were found doing a door-to-door canvassing with great assiduity. They had stitched to the breast pockets badges of the banyan tree, the Socialist election symbol. Their approach was more negative than positive, however. They held meetings, organised demonstrations and processions and sang songs eulogising their party and criticising the Congress. Leaders of national standing, like Jayaprakash Narayan and Asoka Mehta, were brought in to speak to their supporters. They pasted pictures of the banyan tree and other wall posters at all vantage points and utilised social and religious congregations for oratorical, musical and visual propaganda. The main themes of their propaganda dealt with the misdoings of the Congress Ministry and Ministers during the last six years, a scarcity of food, clothing and other necessities of life, mal-administration of controls and corruption in all ranks of government service and business. Their Bhagchhas (crop sharing) move had borne fruit in the form of legislation for granting a ten annas' share to cultivators and six annas to the owners. With this good-will, they impressed on the cultivators that with a Socialist Government the land system would be overhauled radically giving more land to the people out of the surplus of the big proprietors. Their advocacy of a minimum salary of Rs. 100 for low grade government employees evoked good response. The Socialist Party represented that just as the banyan tree is very strong and gives protection to the

people in the sun and the rain, the Socialists voted to power would establish a stable government and stand by the people under all circumstances. They fought in two important constituencies. In Puri Town their candidate, a young allopathic practitioner, scored a significant victory over an influential and wealthy Zamindar who was a leader in the political life of the district for the last thirty years and who was Deputy Leader of the opposition in the previous Assembly. They mustered full strength in supporting another young candidate who contested against the Chief Minister. The Congress used all possible resources to discredit the socialist candidate in this case. The Socialist Party commandeered many college students to work against the Chief Minister. An assault on college student strikers on the 19th July 1951 in front of the Assembly was used as a trump card in their propaganda, distributing enlarged photos of the injured young men and women students. For a time it appeared as if the Socialists would win in this constituency, but in the end the Chief Minister won. Lack of adequate finance was the Socialists' greatest handicap. As a propaganda measure, they made door-to-door collections of funds. Even so the socialists bagged some significant seats. In Banki their young candidate won against a big landlord and a rich capitalist; in Bari-pada their candidate defeated a multi-millionaire who was a non-resident of Orissa. They also won two out of the five seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes in the Mayurbhanj district.

Unlike the Socialists, the Communists were less ambitious, contesting only in such constituencies as were their strong-holds. Some of their successful candidates were released from detention on the eve of polling. The Communists carried on intensive propaganda in their constituencies. Their candidates in some cases were notable nationalist fighters who had acquired political haloes around them on account of frequent sufferings at the hands of the government. They held street corner meetings and carried on house-to-house propaganda. The Communists also had issued wall-posters and made their symbol popular. Processions, demonstrations and other forms of elaborate propaganda were much

less prominent with the C.P.I. Like the Socialists, they made a negative approach and criticised Congress for its acts of omission and commission, especially in the economic field. But they emphasized local issues and acts of governmental oppression. One stalwart of the Communist Party was elected from a constituency in which the Government had fired on women hunger-marchers and killed some of them. A feeling of resentment in this case brought success to three other Communists in two neighbouring constituencies. Two others came from Dhenkanal where they had an agitation against the ruler in 1938 and had suffered greatly. The ruler lost his state and democracy was introduced in 1948, but the sufferings of these two fighters did not end. Another worker among the peasants and a long sufferer won in Puri District. The C.P.I. sustained a defeat in the Parliamentary election where Shri. H. K. Mahatab defeated one of their front-rank leaders who had made a mark in the old Assembly. It was not electioneering, but genuine mass support which brought these successes to the Communists. Their voters were their sincere admirers, without any hope of compensatory rewards.

Among the local parties, the Ganatantra Parishad was only three years old and yet it registered a signal victory at the polls. It is true that the leadership of the party in the first instance was provided by the Rulers of Patna and Kala-handi states, but after the election the legislative leadership of the Parishad was given to a lawyer who is not a ruler and it has sent a journalist to the Council of states. Thus the Parishad has proved its non-feudal character. The Ganatantra Parishad followed exactly the same methods of propaganda as the other parties, but they stressed local issues. Some of these were: the Congress has taken over administration of the states for the last four years, yet the system and efficiency of administration had not been brought up to the level of the old Orissa districts; personal rule had been replaced by impersonal machinery of administration; old taxes had been abolished, but new taxes have been imposed. The Parishad played up these aspects and created a feeling of hatred against Congress leaders and the people

of the old districts. This propaganda caught the imagination of the people.

In Sambalpur, delay in payments and inadequacy of compensation to persons from areas to be submerged by the Hirakud Dam were given emphasis. The Parishad symbol, a bow and arrow, appealed to the Adibasis of these new districts and of the old district of Koraput as they depended upon these weapons for their protection and for gathering their food. Consequently, they bagged almost all or a majority of the seats of these districts as shown below:

<i>District</i>	<i>Total No. of Seats</i>	<i>Ganatantra Parishad</i>
Koraput	11	7
Sambalpur	13	5
Bolangir-Patna	9	9
Sundergarh	5	2
Kalahandi	7	4
Keojhar	5	2

The success of the Parishad was partly due to the personal popularity of the two rulers who had introduced administrations of the modern variety in their respective states, and partly to the unpopularity of the Congress. Their successes were so spectacular that even a Congress Minister was defeated so badly that he lost his deposit.

The Independent People's Party was the handiwork of only three men. All of them were leaders of the Congress before the emergence of the present leadership. They were driven out of the Congress by the new leaders and they kept out of politics for about ten years. The trio came back to politics to create a strong and informed opposition to the Congress. They did not participate in much electioneering, but depended upon their personal eminence and popularity for success. Two of them came out with thunderous success and one of them lost at the polls. The personality of these two successful candidates brought success to two less-known candidates of their party. A party, born on the eve of election, registered a success of 33.33% even without any organisation or finance.



Electioneering for the Adibasi Congress was done by the Congress. The Adibasis are uneducated and illiterate; social functions, drinking and dances were organised to win their support. It was curious that they had evinced the highest civic sense and looked upon polling as a festive occasion where they appeared in very large numbers in ceremonial dress.

## ROLE OF THE PRESS

This state has three Oriya and one English daily. Of these the *Prajatantra* in Oriya and the *Eastern Times* in English are run by the Prajatantra Publications, Ltd., which is an outgrowth of Shri. H. K. Mahatab's proprietary concern, the *Prajatantra* of pre-Independence days. These two dailies were mouthpieces of the Congress and the Congress Ministry. Another Oriya daily, *The Samaj*, the oldest and most widely-read paper in the state, also supported the Congress Party. The third Oriya daily, *Matrubhumi*, was born only in August of 1951 in opposition to the three Congress dailies and was liberally financed by the Ganatantra Parishad. It had a sister weekly, also of the same name. The daily was openly anti-Congress. In addition, the Socialist Party had a weekly named *Krushak*, and the Communist Party had a weekly of its own. The Ganatantra Parishad had a weekly called *Ganatantra* from the time of the party's inception in 1948. The Independent People's Party revived their old weekly, *The Lokmata*, during the election period. In addition, one pro-Congress periodical, *The Spastabadi*, two anti-Congress periodicals, *The Satakatha* and *The Nirankhuntha*, and an independent weekly, *The Janamata* also participated in election propaganda.

The display of news was tendentious. Almost all papers published the election speeches of their respective leaders in extenso, giving them bold and attractive headlines, blacking out the activities of leaders opposed to them or relegating such reports to inconspicuous places. The *Prajatantra* and *Eastern Times* were fanatically pro-Congress, and the *Matrubhumi* was equally non-Congress, the *Samaj* maintaining a

balance between the two. The organs of the Socialists and the Communists were vehemently outspoken against the Congress and were inclined in favour of their respective parties. The common feature of all papers was detailed reporting of news and views which were most unfavourable for parties other than their own. The Press, barring the *Prajatantra*, *Eastern Times*, the *Samaj* and the *Spastabadi* was generally anti-Congress, but the influence, breadth of circulation and popularity of the four Congress papers was much more than an equal match. The different papers took the appearance of respective party bulletins and disinterested readers could not get a clear picture of the situation without reading all the papers.

All papers, subject only to limitations of space, did their utmost in educating the voters in the method of polling and the process of election. The state and district election authorities issued periodic hand-outs on these technical problems. Some of these officers took the help of the Cuttack Station of the All-India Radio and these broadcasts were reproduced in the Press. Demonstrations of mock elections made by district authorities were covered by reports and pictures. Details relating to the number and location of booths, extracts of electoral laws and "do and don'ts" for voters, candidates and agents were elaborately published. The circulation of all papers reached a high peak during the election period.

## POLLING

Polling booths were spread throughout the state. Except in the sparsely populated areas of the Agency, no voter ordinarily had to walk for more than five miles to cast his vote. Primary school rooms, Inspection Bungalows, and other government and semi-government buildings were used as polling stations; wherever these were not available, private buildings were requisitioned or temporary sheds were put up.

A remarkable feature of polling was that the percentage of polling was heavier in rural than in urban areas and a larger percentage of illiterate, Adibasi and women voters

turned up to cast their votes, than others. The percentage of voting in Orissa was 56.7 for the Assembly and 51.1 for the Parliamentary elections. In some parts of the state polling coincided with harvest or of winter paddy. In Puri-Sadr constituency it fell on an important festival day, i.e., "Sambar Dasami".

Two constituencies where the largest and the smallest percentage of votes were polled were Bisra in Sundergarh district and Udayagiri-Mohana in Ganjam district, respectively. In the former 39,877 out of 58,473 and in the latter 4,907 out of 48,078 voters polled their votes. The percentages were 68.2 and 10.2 respectively. Both of these constituencies had a majority of voters from the Scheduled Tribes. In Bisra there were 39,748 tribal voters out of the total electorate of 58,473 voters, i.e. 68%. The Udayagiri-Mohana constituency had the largest percentage of voters of the Scheduled Tribes in the state, their number being 36,419 in an electorate of 48,078, i.e. 75%. The credit for securing the largest and smallest number of votes among successful candidates goes to the Maharaja Shri. Pratap Kesri Deo of Kalhandi and Shri. Pattu Mallika, a Scheduled Tribe candidate, respectively.

There were some cases of impersonation due partly to ignorance of election laws and partly to a perverted sense of duty. Fathers and mothers engaged otherwise sent their children to cast votes on their behalf as on any social occasion; in others, agnates of a dead man came forward to do his duty, as it was impressed upon them that not going to vote might bring down the wrath of the government.

Women voters created difficulties in almost all constituencies in the matter of reluctance in giving out their own names or those of their husbands. Even an assenting nod for continuing a name read out by the Polling Officer was considered improper. In Orissa, women-folk after marriage are not customarily allowed to utter the names of elders in their husband's family.

There were many abuses of the election laws. Conveyance of voters by candidates and parties was an offence, but allegations of illegality on this score were freely made. Even

the District Magistrate of Balasore had to run about his district arresting erring vehicles. In Sambalpur district, mobile courts worked for the immediate trial of offenders. The *modus operandi* of circumvention of the election law was that the vehicles left the voters a short distance from the booth, undetected by the vigilant police or public. When questioned, the voters were tutored to answer that they had themselves paid for the ride. All parties equally offended against this law and complaints were wide-spread in the state.

Propaganda within booths and shouting within a hundred yards of booths were prohibited; even a display of vote-indicating signs was an offence. This law was violated. The holding of meetings on the polling day was illegal, but there were many such cases reported. The name of Gandhiji was freely used by Congress volunteers. Bribery and intimidation were also alleged. Enquiries reveal that money was lavishly distributed in many forms. In some cases, direct payments were made to an elector or a group of electors, and in certain others community centres were financed. Distribution of dhoties and saris to poor people was carried on in some places. A few months before the election, prominent persons were roped in by a discriminating issue of permits and licenses. Voters were also intimidated in some localities. The franchise was interpreted as a duty and persons were threatened with penalty if they did not cast their votes. Some unscrupulous volunteers went to the extent of threatening oppression to rebellious voters in case they did not vote for Congress. Certain Zamindar candidates bullied their tenants for voting in their favour and not for the Congress. In certain places, voters were asked not to cast their votes in the box, but to carry them outside the booth so that a reliable voter might deposit all such votes in one particular box. The Socialists and Congressmen came to blows in the districts of Balasore and a Socialist worker was reported killed. It was reported from a part of Cuttack district that Communist workers threatened people with physical violence if they voted for Congress. In Dhenkanal, Puri and Cuttack districts, complaints were made that leaders of different cases commanded

their followers to vote for particular candidates. In Sambalpur, certain arrests of Ganatantra Parishad workers were made for alleged disturbances at a Congress election meeting. Even after the election, a successful candidate of Ganatantra Parishad was stoned, assaulted and injured and his car was damaged by certain miscreants who were arrested and are being prosecuted

## ABUSES OF ELECTION PROCEDURE

There was no official report about abuses of election procedure. But there was repolling in four places, namely Titalgarh in Bolangir, Jeypore in Koraput, Brijarajnagar in Sambalpur and Phulbani in Boudh-Phulbani districts for alleged tampering of ballot boxes or for inadvertent use of Parliamentary ballot papers for Assembly election, or *vice versa*.

## ELECTION RESULTS

Orissa has been famous as a Congress stronghold since 1937. In the elections held in 1936-37, Orissa was the first province in India to return a majority for the Congress. Communalism, of the Hindu or Muslim brand, had absolutely no place in Orissa politics. In the elections of 1946, the Congress scored an astounding victory securing an absolute majority, uncontested. The final party position then showed 47 seats for the Congress in a House of 60. The General Elections of 1951-52, however, brought about a great change in the political picture of the state. The Congress Party not only did not sweep the polls, but was reduced to a minority party in the state legislature. It polled a little less than 38 per cent of the total votes cast and secured 67 seats in the Assembly of 140.

The Ganatantra Parishad, organised by former rulers of Orissa states, emerged as the principal opposition to the party in power. It won 31 seats and polled 20 per cent of votes. The Independents, the Socialists and the Communists won 21, 10 and 7 seats respectively in the Assembly.

In the elections to the House of the People, the Congress

Party secured 11 out of 20 seats, Ganatantra Parishad won 5 seats, Independents 2 and the Socialist and Communist parties 1 each.

Certain tentative conclusions can be drawn on the basis of an analysis of the General Elections in Orissa:

(a) The Congress Party can no longer be sure of success merely by reason of mentioning old sacrifices and using the names of national leaders. Voters have become critical and they will judge the achievements of parties and men.

(b) Any man is not suitable for any constituency. One who has worked for a particular locality has a better chance of success there, no matter whether his opponents are wealthy or are backed by powerful parties. The defeat of two Zamindars by a Socialist and an Independent, and the defeat of the President of the Orissa Congress Committee, Shri. Biswanath Das, by his Independent rival Shri. Uma Charan Pattnaik, in the Ghumsar Parliamentary constituency, support this generalisation.

(c) The ex-rulers of the states have won their respective seats against popular adversaries. All the six rulers who contested the election won. Two of them belong to the Congress Party, three to the Ganatantra Parishad and one is an Independent.

(d) Most big Zamindars have won. One belongs to the Congress Party and three are Independents.

(e) Three women contested the elections and all of them were elected. Two belong to the Congress Party and one is an Independent.

(f) Personality, rather than party labels, helps in winning elections.

(g) The Communists have a considerable appeal. Even without much electioneering, they can gain many votes.

# 7 PUNJAB

BODH RAJ SHARMA  
Government College, Hoshiarpur

*Area: 37,378 sq. miles*

*Population: 1,26,41,205*

*Electorate: 67,18,345*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats ..	18	126
Constituencies ..	15	105
Uncontested seats ..	—	1
Contesting candidates	101	842
Valid votes polled ..	49,92,338	49,78,589
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies	55.3	55.5

## INTRODUCTORY

The Punjab has certain special features which will have to be borne in mind before making a survey of the general elections in this state.

In the first place the Punjab is now a border state, the land border with Pakistan extending over a length of a few

I wish to thank my friend and student, Shri. Iqbal Nath Chaudhari, M.A., Research Scholar in Political Science in the Punjab University, for all the help he gave me in the preparation of this report. My thanks are also due to Professor Richard L. Park, who kindly sent me all the material he had collected on elections in this state as well as in Pepsu and Himachal Pradesh.

[For reasons of space we have given here only a brief extract from the comprehensive report prepared by the author. For greater details the reader is referred to the full report which has been published under the title *Report on Elections in the Punjab* (1951-52), Khanna Book Depot, Jullundur city—Editors.]

hundred miles. Since our relations with Pakistan are not happy, the people living on the border are not quite settled. Every day we hear reports of raids and firing from across the Pakistan side. Lifting of cattle and even of men is not infrequent. Living under these conditions the people near the border could not participate in the elections with the same zeal and enthusiasm as their fellow citizens elsewhere.

Secondly, the population of this border state now consists of a very large number of displaced persons estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 25 lakhs. These people have not yet settled down. Not only have they suffered heavy material losses but a number of them are suffering from acute mental agony having lost daughters, sisters, wives, husbands, sons and other near and dear friends and relatives. Some of them move from place to place to find solace in the company of one relative or the other and this unsettled condition has had its effect on the elections also. The material losses also have been responsible for moral deterioration in the otherwise high ethical standards of these unfortunate people.

Thirdly, the Punjab is the homeland of the brave Sikh community. One section which was heretofore the most important section, i.e. the Akali Dal, is now antagonistic to the Congress organisation and the Congress government. Master Tara Singh, the accredited leader of this section, started the cry of the "Panth in Danger" and so demanded a separate state for the Sikhs. Later he changed this demand into a Punjabi-speaking state, which to all intents and purposes means a Sikh state, because he insisted that the Punjabi language must be written in the Gurumukhi script, which has never been the script of the Hindus. So this section appealed to communal tendencies, which have been responsible for the partition of the country and for the very heavy sufferings of the Sikh community in particular. This further led to bitterness between the Hindus and the Sikhs and the Indian language press accentuated this bitterness so much that everybody was afraid that the elections might be the occasion of a serious internecine warfare between the two communities. The Government, therefore, had to make extraordinary arrangements to meet any emergencies.



Fourthly, another all India party, called the Jan Sangh, took its birth in this state a few months before the elections. Though Shri. Golwalkar, the Guruji of the Rashtriya Swayam-Sewak Sangh, has disclaimed any relation with this political party, yet even a responsible man like Pandit Nehru has not hesitated to call the Jan Sangh the "illegitimate child of the Rashtriya Swayam-Sewak Sangh." This party believes in the revival of Hindu culture and the Hindu Rashtra, i.e. a Hindu state. This was, therefore, communal in the sense that it became a source of danger to Muslims, Christians, and even Sikhs. It made an attractive appeal to the displaced persons in particular, who had suffered so heavily at the hands of Muslims in the partition days. Soon this party found a leader in the redoubtable Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and was able to have a very efficient organisation. In alliance with the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad it soon assumed a very strong position and the danger to the law and order situation in the Punjab during elections became more pronounced.

Fifthly, the political situation in the state was anything but satisfactory. The Congress Government, with Dr. Gopichand Bhargava as its leader, had become thoroughly discredited in the state. Several Bar associations at District Headquarters had passed resolutions that this Government should go. In the press there was a virulent propaganda by the Congress organisation headed by S. Partap Singh Kairon, the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, and L. Jagat Narain, its general secretary, against the Congress Government. For a pretty long time the Congress Legislative party had been busy in the campaign of signature taking. This meant that no ministry had the confidence of the entire congress membership in the legislature. In 1949 Shri. Bhimsen Sachar with the help of Gyani Kartar Singh was able to get signatures of more than half the members. Dr. Gopichand had to resign and Shri. Bhimsen Sachar stepped into his shoes as the Chief Minister. Shri. Sachar had to placate Gyani Kartar Singh by evolving what is now known as the Sachar formula on language policy. Gyani Kartar Singh was also able to get certain Scheduled Castes included in the group

who are eligible for concessions granted to Scheduled Castes. Another six months and the same Gyani Kartar Singh was responsible for overthrowing the Sachar ministry by alliance with Dr. Bhargava. All these six months the signature campaign had been on. Naturally a price had to be paid for every signature and so the political life of the state was at a low ebb. This had its effect on the administration also. It was feared that the administrative efficiency had been lowered to a dangerous point. It is alleged that the Congress High Command also was responsible for this schism in the Punjab. Dr. Gopichand has complained of the change in the attitude of the Congress High Command towards him. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the Congress party was a divided house and therefore an object of convenient attack by all other political parties. Fortunately the Congress High Command took courage in both hands and directed Dr. Gopichand to resign. This enabled the President to take over the administration of the state under Art. 356 of the Constitution and the provisional parliament became responsible for legislation in the state. So when the elections actually took place, this state was under the administrative control of the President who could guarantee, through the Governor of the state, free and fair elections.

## ELECTION ALLIANCES

The most important election alliances were either the result of alliance between All-India parties or between their local representatives in the Punjab.

1. The Socialist—S.C.F. alliance in the All India sphere brought about an alliance in this state also.

2. The Jan Sangh and the Scheduled Castes Federation entered into an alliance for the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts. This, in a way, was disobedience of the orders of the Scheduled Castes Federation High Command. Shri. Balraj Bhalla, President of the Jan Sangh and Seth Krishan Dass, President of the Punjab Scheduled Castes Federation issued a joint statement promising to lend support to each other in the following constituencies:

(1) Adampur, (2) Nawanshahr, (3) Nakodar, (4) Phillaur, (5) Kartarpur, (6) Jullundur Parliamentary constituency, (7) Nawanshahr Parliamentary constituency, (8) Jullundur South-East and South-West constituency, (9) Hoshiarpur (Reserved) Assembly seat, (10) Hoshiarpur General Parliamentary seat.

3. In the Kangra Parliamentary constituency, an alliance was made between the Jan Sangh and the Akali Party. Master Tara Singh issued a statement extending full support to Shri. Yodh Raj, the Jan Sangh candidate. Shri. Yodh Raj is the Managing Director of the Punjab National Bank and is the son of the late Mahatma Hans Raj and a younger brother of Shri. Balraj Bhalla, founder of the Jan Sangh in the Punjab.

4. Similarly, in the Ambala-Simla Parliamentary constituency there was an alliance between the Jan Sangh and the Akalis. Here also Master Tara Singh promised full support to the Jan Sangh candidate, Rai Bahadur Sohan Lal. The Rai Bahadur is the proprietor of Rai Sahib Munshi Gulab Singh and Sons, Publishers and Booksellers, previously of Lahore and now of Delhi.

5. For the Ambala Cantt. seat of the Punjab Assembly the K.M.P.P. entered into an alliance with the Akali Party. Master Tara Singh urged his followers to vote for Shri. Jawahar Lal Kapur. But the Loca Singh Sabha leader S. Niranjana Singh Sarpaul, President of the Gurudwara committee, Ambala, repudiated the recommendation of Master Tara Singh and exhorted the voters to vote for the candidate of their choice.

6. In the Gurgaon district there was an alliance between the Zamindara Party and the Jan Sangh.

7. In the Jullundur constituencies there was an alliance between the Akalis and the Socialists and this went counter to the All India Socialist-Scheduled Castes Federation alliance.

8. A queer alliance was reported from Rupar where the Congress candidate for the general seat for the Assembly entered into an alliance with an independent Harijan candidate. The Congress nominee for the Rupar reserved seat,

Capt. Dharam Singh, made a complaint to the All-India Congress Committee against the attitude of his general seat colleague.

9. On Jan. 13 was reported from Jullundur an alliance between the Communists on the one side and the Akalis and Jan Sangh candidates on the other at the Talwan polling station of the Numahal constituency of the Punjab Assembly.

It was the first instance in the Doaba that the Communists entered into a political alliance with non-Communist groups.

Since the withdrawal of Pt. Tara Kesh (Independent) the Congress candidate (Shri. S. Darbara Singh) had begun to cause great headache to the Communists. They, therefore, established a common camp against the Congress.

10. In the Nakodar constituency, the Akalis entered into an alliance with the S.C.F. for the Reserved seat, although they had nominated Shri. Shadi Ram for this seat. Shri Shadi Ram was left to plough his lonely furrow.

11. In the Thanesar constituency also an alliance was reported between the Jan Sangh and the Zamindara party.

12. In addition to these local alliances, the alliance between the Jan Sangh and the Akali party in the Delhi state had serious repercussions in the Punjab. In the Punjab both these parties claimed to be the spokesmen of radical Sikhs and Hindus and had pronounced differences on vital issues. The same parties entering into an alliance in Delhi exposed their true aim and that, to some extent, explains the serious setback that both these parties suffered in the Punjab.

## TYPES OF PROPAGANDA

The types of propaganda took the usual form of posters, placards and handbills; badges and balloons; public meetings; individual canvassing, both through men and women supporters; processions, and prabhat pheries; pamphlets and articles in the press; announcements on the loud speakers on tongas, lorries, rickshaws, cars and cycles; sandwiched men; talks and debates in colleges in which the candidates or members of different political parties participated; cinema shows and last, though not the least important, was money, in cash or

kind, which helped the propaganda machinery.

(a) *Posters*

The people of the Punjab have not been much behind others in the art of propaganda. Walls of houses and public buildings and even public roads were literally littered with posters and the boys who pasted the posters on the walls etc., made a thriving trade of it. There were two types of posters. There were posters which recounted the services of a particular candidate and there were posters that condemned their rivals, in the most exaggerated terms. Mud-slinging became a fine art and its practitioners were chosen with great care.

The Jan Sangh posters seemed almost to be the largest in number. There were practically no posters, in large parts of the Punjab, of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad, and the Forward Bloc. The Akali Party also did not seem to have spent much money on this device of propaganda. There were large size posters containing the symbols of the parties or of the independent members and the exhortation to the voter to vote for a particular party or for a particular individual. The Congress posters exhibited a large size photograph of Pt. Nehru and the words: "Vote for the Congress if you want a progressive, strong and secular state."

Other Congress posters contained a picture of the two bulls with yoke on. In every town the same posters were fixed on the walls, the only difference being that the names of the candidates were different. There was no prominent place anywhere in the state which did not display the Congress posters. These posters were also pasted on the sides of tongas, rickshaws, lorries, on shops of all varieties (particularly barber shops) and even in compartments of railway carriages in some cases. It became a problem for the cinema people to find space for pasting their own posters.

All the non-Congress posters condemned the Congress for all the sufferings of the people. The shortage of food, cloth and houses, the difficulties created by the controls, the partition of India, unemployment, the pro-Muslim policy, corrup-

tion, nepotism, etc., etc., were all emphasized. The Jan Sangh posters, in particular, were strongly condemnatory of the Congress administration in this state. Some posters contained the following question: "What are the achievements of the Congress?" Then, seriatim, they mentioned all the sins of omission and commission that could be laid at the doors of the Congress. All the Jan Sangh posters, large and small displayed the symbols of the party, viz. the picture of a "Deep" with a lighted flame and the words: "The only ray of light in an otherwise political darkness." This made a very great appeal to the sentimental reader. The small Jan Sangh posters exhorted the voters to vote for the local Jan Sangh candidates.

The Socialist posters were not a very big affair. Since they had not put up candidates for all Assembly constituencies, they did not print any posters in some places. But where they had put up candidates, Socialist posters, big and small, vied with the Congress and the Jan Sangh posters. There was the picture of the tree and the words: "Vote for the Socialist candidates," giving the name of the candidates, both for the Assembly and the House of the People.

Some of the Independent candidates put up very large posters denouncing party government. They also magnified their own achievements in the service of the people in the local area. They made tall promises to serve the man in the street who had suffered so heavily because of mal-administration.

The Communist Party displayed a very large number of posters of all sizes. At Jullundur, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepore, Fazilka, Moga and Ludhiana, there were many Communist posters. At Hoshiarpur very large sized posters appealed to the voters to vote for Baba Harnam Singh (Tundi Lāt) "One armed", for his long and meritorious services to the people of the Doaba. At Jullundur and at Amritsar there were large Communist posters appealing to the ill-fed, the ill-clad and the ill-housed not to vote for the Congress, as it was an organisation of capitalists. Similarly, at Fazilka, Ludhiana and Ferozepore, there were posters which were couched in general terms giving the programme of their party

and there were others which appealed to the voters to vote for particular candidates.

The Akali party did not waste much money on posters. This does not mean that it did not appeal to the voters through posters. A large number of its posters were printed in the Gurumukhi and Urdu scripts. The party symbol, the bow and the arrow, was prominently displayed. On some posters a full-sized picture of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, was also displayed. The demands of the Akali Dal were couched in forceful language and appeal was made to the voter to save the Sikh religion and the Sikh community. The posters also contained the economic programme of the Akali party and this programme was as attractive as that of the Socialist Party.

The Zamindara Party posters were limited to the districts in the Ambala division. In these the party asked for votes for their candidates because they alone could save the rural areas from the greedy clutches of the urban banias. They also promised to improve the economic condition of the poor farmers and tenants.

#### (b) *Public Meetings*

For about two months there was an uninterrupted series of public meetings. Sometimes there were more than one public meeting at one place and both pretty largely attended. Be it said to the credit of the voters that generally they did not disturb these meetings. There were sometimes some exhibitions of irrepressible partisan spirit and while there were "Zindabads" ('Long Live' slogans) for their favourite party, there were, sometimes, "Murdabads" ('Death') for the opposite party. But, on the whole, the police had no problem. The local poets and debaters all played their part and mostly creditably. The speeches were well prepared, the poems were well recited and the songs sung had a special appeal. At some of these meetings there was a little heckling also and this was considered as disturbance by the party organisers but in this they were wrong. On some occasions the speakers used very strong language but it usually rested at that. No

*bones were broken anywhere in the state. The substance of the speeches was glorification of their own parties and of their own candidates and condemnation of the other parties and their candidates. The voters were also educated. They were told of the great power that had been put in their hands by the vote. They were advised to weigh the merits of each candidate and only then to vote. At the end of every meeting most voters would call out "Congress Zindabad" or "Jan Sangh Zindabad" so that the organisers went away with the assurance that the people were with them. In these meetings emphasis was also laid on the symbols of the parties. Women played no insignificant part. They addressed combined meetings of men and women as well as meetings organised specially for women. They requested their sisters to understand the significance of the vote and to cast their precious votes for the best candidates.*

Some meetings at Ludhiana were reported to have been disturbed. For example, on December 11, two dozen Akalis armed with lathis disturbed a meeting organised in favour of S. Arjan Singh, an Independent candidate. Master Tara Singh was criticised there and, therefore, the Akalis demonstrated with lathis. Some people suffered minor injuries.

In the countryside these meetings were of a different type. It was only through the influence of the village headman or some big money-lender or landlord that the village people collected to listen to the talks of the leaders. It was usually an informal sort of gathering. The candidates, therefore, had to pay more attention to the collection of the people than to the delivery of their speeches, and even then the speeches did not seem to matter very much. The Akali leaders were accompanied by Ragis (singers) and this was a very good method to collect the voters in the villages and to convey to them the message of the Akali Dal.

Where a whole village was inhabited by the followers of a particular persuasion, the other parties did not try to hold their meetings. If they did try, they failed to collect the voters. If the voters came, the meeting ended in a fiasco. Where, however, there were some members of the other parties, they were most loyal workers for their groups.



(c) *Individual Canvassing*

Great emphasis was laid on individual canvassing. It was physically impossible for any candidate to contact 50,000 odd voters in an Assembly constituency and 3 to 4 lakhs of voters in a Parliamentary constituency. It was also not possible for candidates to appoint such a large number of workers as could contact every single voter. The only redeeming feature was that one Parliamentary constituency included within it seven or eight Assembly constituencies, and, therefore, when an Assembly candidate appealed to the voters to vote Congress or Socialist or Jan Sangh or Akali, he also partly helped his Parliamentary colleague and *vice versa*. Since the Congress had a candidate in every Assembly constituency and since it had a strong organisation with its branches in every town, ward and village, it was comparatively easier for its candidates to contact the individual voter. Women workers also helped in approaching the individual voter. In groups of 4 or 5 they went to every house and through the women-folk tried to influence all the voters. But they did not confine their appeal to women only; e.g., the dhobi of the writer of this report was approached at his house by a party of young ladies, who asked him to support the cause of the protectors of the cow. They asked him to sign a paper which was a kind of pledge that he would vote only for the Jan Sangh and no other party. Perplexed at their insistence he sought the advice of the present writer but perhaps was disappointed because the writer happened to be a government servant, and could only recommend to him to vote for the best candidate.

Groups of women workers also went from village to village canvassing amongst the women and thus making sure of 50% of the vote.

In big and small towns groups of men including well-known local social and political leaders went from shop to shop eliciting promise from the voters. But the voter proved a very elusive factor. To every solicitor for his vote he would bow respectfully and say: "*Tabedar han jee*" i.e. "I shall carry out your esteemed orders."

#### (d) Processions

Appeal was made to the general voter through this spectacular instrument also. Processions with bands playing and slogans resounding to the skies wended their way through the main streets of the towns. People saw from their house tops or offices or shops the long march of bullocks with yokes on, of cycles, of camels, of torches and of bullock carts carrying singers. Leaving aside the candidate and his near and dear friends, the other members of the procession were usually school urchins. The processions did not disturb the routine life of the town very much. The shop-keepers continued plying their trade and just enjoyed a short respite for a few minutes. The organisers of these processions sometimes arranged for the showering of flowers and the innocent spectator would be duped into believing that the party whose procession he was witnessing was very popular. Sometimes some persons had to be paid also to form an imposing procession.

One particular form of procession was the Prabhat Pheries. This was mostly adopted by the Jan Sangh candidates. Early in the morning, they went about from lane to lane, singing religious songs and ending them with "Jan Sangh ko vote do." The Congress is, of course, accustomed to Prabhat Pheries. During the national week and on other important occasions, Prabhat Pheries have been the usual mode of appeal to the common man. So during the elections also Prabhat Pheries asked for a vote for the Congress.

The Akali processions were usually accompanied by singers who recited *shabads* from Guru Granth Sahib or other sacred books. The bow and arrow of Guru Gobind Singh (the symbol of the Akali Party was bow and arrow) was prominently displayed in these processions and after the recitation rang the clarion call to the voter to vote for the Panth.

Dr. P. N. Soni, Independent candidate from Simla, complained that some of these party candidates arranged with the managers and headmasters of schools for the grant of leave to half of the students in the morning and to the other half in the afternoon. So the school could work and the

processions also could continue uninterrupted! The students were carried on motor-lorries or trucks. One of the bigger students would cry out: "Who deserves the vote?" and the rest of the processionists would bellow forth: "Mela Ram." One would again ask: "Who saved the country?" Pat came the chorus "Congress", and so on.

(e) *The Press*

The press, particularly the Indian language press, was a very potent force in moulding public opinion and in putting the various parties and candidates in the wrong or in the right. It educated public opinion. A number of candidates are known to have paid handsomely to the press for a favourable commentary on their character and qualifications. And as an individual voter usually read only one paper, he was biassed in favour of or prejudiced against one or the other party or candidate. But those who frequented reading rooms and could read the views of all the newspapers felt very much embarrassed because one paper just cancelled the impression created by the other.

(f) *Pamphlets*

Several candidates wrote themselves small pamphlets or got them written by their friends. These booklets enumerated their achievements. A short account of their lives, their sacrifices, their high character, their fitness for entry into the legislature were pointedly mentioned. These pamphlets and books were distributed free and were even sent post free to all people who mattered in the constituency. These raised the candidate in the estimation of the voters but they also helped the opponents to pick out the mis-statements and make capital of them.

(g) *Mobile Loud-speakers*

Mike-fitted tongas, lorries, and other conveyances ran through the streets asking the voters to vote for this or that candidate. This was extremely annoying because they continued their work from 5 a.m. to 12 p.m. and the people got sick of them. In some places the authorities were requested

to stop this noise at least during the night. It does not appear to have proved very helpful to the candidates also. It only appears to be an infectious disease. When one candidate adopted this practice, another did not like to lag behind. Perhaps the candidates during the next election might get wise and might not waste their money on this device because it only annoys the voter.

(h) *Sandwiched Men*

Sandwiched men also exhibited the symbols and names of the different candidates from morning till evening. This is rather a new device and did attract notice but it is doubtful whether it fetched many votes. One good thing about it was the fact that it gave employment to some poor men.

(i) *Debates and Talks*

Several colleges arranged talks by the different candidates. This particularly happened in Ambala, Simla and Jullundur, where symposia of this type were arranged. The candidates of different parties gave reasons why the voter should vote for them and why he should not vote for the other parties. This was definitely effective, because the intelligent voter does play an important part in influencing the less educated voters. In some places debates were held and the candidates of different parties or supporters of different parties spoke for their party programmes.

(j) *Hand-Bills*

A very large number of hand bills were printed by each candidate and distributed by the hundred on occasions of public meetings, fairs and even at religious gatherings. The writer of this report saw some women carrying them reverentially to their homes from a temple where they had gone to pray and where the pujari had been persuaded to distribute them along with the parshad.

(k) *Badges and Balloons*

Badges with symbols of the different parties were distributed free among students. Similarly, balloons with symbols

of the different parties were distributed free among children of both sexes. The school boys, of course, were happy. Whether they fetched any vote is still an unsolved problem.

### (1) *Money*

But in some cases the determining part was played by money. Money works through different channels. Sometimes it puts on the garb of charity. Some candidates in Kangra distributed blankets and dhotis among the poor. It was a great philanthropic act but it had a vote-catching effect also. "Verily charity blesseth him who giveth." In some cases *langars* were arranged for the sadhus and for the Brahmins. In some cases money was promised for a school or a tank or a well. All these are considered proper methods in western countries where money spent in these forms is given the high sounding name of "Nursing a constituency." But the longer the purse, the greater the charity and the larger the number of beneficiaries and resultant votes.

Wine also played its part. As a matter of fact in certain predominantly Sikh localities a drink on the election eve is a part of hoary tradition and so even Mahatma Gandhi's precepts on drink had to be thrown to the winds by some candidates! Money was also employed in buying out the rival candidates. The editor of the *Prabhat* was sued in a court of law by Shri. S. Sohan Singh Josh, Communist candidate, because it had published a news item that he had accepted one lakh of rupees and had withdrawn from S. Surjit Singh Majithia's constituency. It is very difficult to prove whether any money actually changed hands but it was freely insinuated at least in some constituencies that the withdrawals of certain candidates were due to big cheques offered and accepted. In some cases the withdrawing candidate or his relatives benefited otherwise, e.g. a high post was offered in the institution controlled by the candidate in whose favour the withdrawal was made. But in some cases money in its most naked form also was offered to the voters. This particularly happened in refugee camps and in the case of Scheduled Caste voters. Whether the money given also brought the vote is doubtful. Some clever voters got the money from

both sides or in some cases from more than two sides and did not vote for any of them. Had money been effective, the millionaires who contested the elections would not have been defeated.

A voter in the Amb constituency of the Hoshiarpur district related the following anecdote. He said: "One candidate offered me Rs. 3/- for the vote and the other offered me Rs. 2/- and I accepted both thankfully." When asked the name of the person for whom he had voted, he said that he voted for the latter. The reason given was that he offered less, and so was considered less dishonest and would prove to be a better legislator!

# 8

## UTTAR PRADESH

*A Note prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 1,13,409 sq. miles*

*Population: 6,32,15,742*

*Electorate: 3,17,70,309*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	86	430
Constituencies .. ..	69	347
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	—
Contesting candidates .. ..	364	2,604
Valid votes polled .. ..	1,70,74,825	1,67,58,627
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..	38.4	37.8

### INTRODUCTORY

Uttar Pradesh, a state comprising 51 districts, is the largest single unit in the Indian Union. Uttar Pradesh is the home state of Prime Minister Nehru and of other prominent leaders of the national movement. The state provides leadership for two other major political parties. Acharya Narendra Dev, Chairman of the Socialist Party, and Acharya J. B. Kripalani, President of the Kisan Mazoor Praja Party, come from this state.

Elections in Uttar Pradesh had a special significance for the whole country. An examination of the nominations of various parties for the election will illustrate the point.

In the list of the Congress Party one finds four Ministers of the Central Cabinet, two Ministers of State and one Deputy Minister. Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Shri. Sri

Prakash, Shri. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Mrs. V. L. Pandit, Pandit G. B. Pant and many other prominent Congressmen contested either for an Assembly or House of the People seat. Acharya J. B. Kripalani, Shri. Shibban Lal Saxena and Shri. Sadiq Ali, General Secretary of the K.M.P.P., contested on behalf of the K.M.P.P.; Mahant Digvijaya Nath, General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, was the Mahasabha candidate for the House of the People. Among Independent candidates, prominent were: Pandit Kunzru, the well-known Liberal leader, and Shri. S. K. D. Paliwal, former Minister and President of the U.P. branch of the K.M.P.P. and a Congress rebel at the time of elections.

### GENERAL ELECTIONS

Uttar Pradesh has the largest Assembly in the country, elected by the largest electorate. The state Legislative Assembly consists of 430 members, and the Legislative Council of 72 members. More than 50 per cent of the population of the state were entitled to exercise their franchise in the General Elections. Of the total electorate 45 per cent were women; Muslims and Scheduled Castes constituted 14 and 20 per cent of the total electorate, respectively.

Elections were not new to the people of U.P. But previous elections, both those of 1937 and 1946, were held under restricted franchise. Thus in the 1951-52 General Elections a great majority of voters were exercising their franchise for the first time.

For the purpose of electing 430 members to the state Assembly, the state was divided into 347 constituencies, of which 264 were single-member and 83 double-member. Eighty-three seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes. For elections to the House of the People there were 69 constituencies, 52 single-member and 17 double-member. Seventeen of the 86 seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

The polling dates were January 22, 25, 28, 31 and February 18, 19 and 21 of 1952. In the hilly districts of the state polling was held in February while in other places polling was conducted in January.



## POLITICAL PARTIES

The Congress Party is by far the most important party in U.P. It came into existence in the early years of this century and proved to be stronger here than anywhere else in the country during the Independence movement. The party has a very widespread and moderately efficient organisation. The name and reputation of Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru, and the fact that the Congress was the ruling party, also gave the Congress a great advantage.

After Independence there was a rift in the Congress and the Socialists left the organisation in 1948. The Socialists were followed by Shri. Triloki Singh and others who first organised the Jan Congress and later merged with the K.M.P.P. When the K.M.P.P. was formed in 1951, a number of Congressmen left the Congress Party (along with Shri. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai) and joined the K.M.P.P. Most of these Congress dissidents went back to the Congress fold when Shri. Kidwai decided to return to Congress. At the time of selection of candidates there arose disputes again and some of the dissidents who had returned to the Congress left it once more, later contesting the elections as Independent candidates. In spite of all these internal disputes the Congress Party continued to be the strongest party in the state.

The Congress abolished landlordism and made it possible for peasants to acquire Bhumidari rights after paying 10 times the annual land revenue. Though not many have actually benefited from this act as yet, the measure has proved to be attractive and popular.

The Socialist Party was organised as an Independent party in 1948. It had existed as a part of the Congress Party since 1934 and its leaders in U.P. (Acharya Narendra Dev and Shri. Damodar Swarup Seth) had been Presidents of the U.P. Congress Committee for a number of years. When the Socialists formed a separate body, they resigned from the state Assembly and contested the bye-elections which they lost. But by this action the Socialists took the name of the party to the villages of the state. The Socialists concentrated on village work. They opposed the payment of compensation to

landlords and the method of peasant land purchase in the Zamindari Abolition Bill. This action gave them some popularity among the peasants of U.P. However, the Socialist Party's organisation in U.P. is not very strong nor is it efficient.

In the elections of 1937 and 1946 the main opposition to the Congress came from the Muslim League. After partition the Muslim League went out of existence in U.P. Most of the ex-Muslim Leaguers have joined the Congress Party.

The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party of Acharya J. B. Kripalani would have been the main opposition in the state legislature but for the defection of Shri. R. A. Kidwai and his followers back to the Congress. The K.M.P.P. resources dried up when Shri. Kidwai left. Large numbers of Muslim voters who were expected to cast their votes in favour of the K.M.P.P. because of Shri. Kidwai's presence in it went over to the Congress. The party also was not able to build up its organisation in the interior parts of the state. Its activities remained confined to the urban areas.

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh was organised a few months before the elections. It was actively supported by the volunteers of the R.S.S. It also received some support from some of the landlords. The Jan Sangh concentrated in the constituencies in which the Congress Party had put up Muslim candidates. It hoped that a communal appeal would secure non-Muslim votes for its candidates. This calculation proved to be in error.

The U.P. Praja Party was organised by some landlords of the state to resist (1) the land reform measures of the Congress Party and (2) later, to fight the case of landlords in the courts. When these efforts did not succeed, the party decided to contest the elections with a view to defeating the Congress Party at the polls.

The Communist Party, the Scheduled Castes Federation, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Forward Bloc (Subhasists), the Bolshevik Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the U.P. Revolutionary Socialist Party had existed in the state for some time, but they wield no influence except in a few

small pockets, as the elections revealed.

The Independents contested the elections in a very large number. Some of them were Congressmen who were refused official nominations; some were officially nominated as Congress Party candidates, but refused to accept the party nominations. Some prominent industrialists also contested the elections as Independents. Pandit Kunzru, Shri. S. K. D. Paliwal and Shri. Govind Sahai were prominent among Independent candidates for the House of the People. Independent candidates did have some personal influence in their constituencies, but not enough to resist the onslaught of the organised parties.

### ELECTION ALLIANCES

1. The Socialist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation entered into an election alliance.

2. The Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad reached an electoral agreement in the initial stages, but the agreement did not prove very satisfactory.

3. Local agreements were made between the U.P. Praja Party, the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad.

4. The Communist Party, the U.P. Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Bolshevik Party worked in close alliance.

5. Local agreements also were made between the Jan Sangh and the Scheduled Castes Federation.

### ELECTION ISSUES AND ELECTIONEERING

Shri. Nehru made an extensive electioneering tour of the state. He criticised the communal parties, such as the Jan Sangh and Akali Dal, saying that it appeared as if these parties wanted armies to march on Pakistan without realizing how destructive modern war was. Dealing with the Congress Party's achievements, Nehru said that river valley projects would increase the wealth of the country. Speaking about the foreign policy of his government, he claimed that the policy pursued by India had raised the prestige of the country

in world politics. He emphasized that free India would not tolerate French and Portuguese possessions on Indian soil. At Bareilly, Shri. Nehru told a meeting that the Congress had welded diverse elements into a nation and made it possible for people to think in terms of the country. "We must still further strengthen the bonds of nationalism," he said, "by sinking provincial and other differences. If communalism had not stood in the way, freedom would have come even earlier." He said that communalism was backed by reactionaries, vested interests and those afraid of economic revolution. Nehru told the kisans of Gorakhpur and Deoria districts that they had to construct irrigation works to provide water for their thirsty fields with the organised help of the government and the people. He reminded them that the struggle for economic Swaraj was no less arduous than the struggle for political Swaraj and they should work patiently and with determination to win it. Shri. Nehru told a meeting in Banaras that it would be disastrous to leave the fate of the country in the hands of communal organisations like the Jan Sangh, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Hindu Mahasabha which he said, were out to split the country. Other organisations like the Socialist Party and the K.M.P.P. in their election alliance with different parties in different states, said Shri. Nehru, were every day appearing in "new skirts" and "new coats."

Pandit Pant, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, also toured the state. Addressing a gathering of kisans in the Barabanki District, he said that the Congress' objective was to achieve unity and all-round prosperity in the country. He said the Congress was the only party which could effectively shoulder the responsibility of the government, maintain law and order and bring about progress.

Next to the Congress Party in the election field was the Socialist Party. Socialist leaders (Shri. Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia) toured the state to canvass support for the Party's 351 state Assembly and 61 House of the People candidates. Shri. J. P. Narayan, addressing an election meeting in Amgarh, said that if the socialists were returned to power the disparity of various

income groups would go and they would concentrate on increasing the wealth of the country. During five years of Congress rule the rich had become richer and the poor poorer. If the people wanted a new and better order of things this government must be changed, he said. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, addressing a meeting at Gorakhpur, said that an analysis of the Congress Party's victories in elections in other states showed that "90 per cent of the Congress popularity in the country had gone down to 40 per cent. It could be safely predicted that there would be its complete downfall in the next elections." Dr. Lohia said there was a great necessity of having a third power bloc apart from the Communist and Atlantic "camps" in the world for peace and progress. Explaining the party's policy, Dr. Lohia said the Socialist Party would prefer to perish rather than join hands with the Communist or other reactionary parties. Socialist Party spokesmen claimed that the party had considerable popular support in eastern and central Uttar Pradesh, particularly in the districts of Gazipur, Azamgarh, Shajahanpur, Bareilly, Aligarh, Bulandshahar, Deoria, Barabanki, and the hilly areas of Nainital, Almora, Dehra Dun and Garhwal. The party advocated removal of sales tax, return of the money collected from peasants for Bhumidari rights, redistribution of land and nationalisation of industries. The Socialist Party campaign amongst the women of the state was carried on by Mahila Panchayat, an organisation affiliated to the Socialist Party claiming a membership of 10,000.

The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party also launched a vigorous election campaign. Acharya Kripalani (party President), Shrinati Sucheta Kripalani, Dr. Prafulla Ghosh and other leaders of the party toured the state. The party had set up 264 candidates for the state Assembly and 37 for the House of the People. Acharya Kripalani warned the people that if the efforts to bring about peaceful change failed, there would be no escape from violent revolution. The K.M.P.P. promised to return Bhumidari money to peasants and still make them Bhumidars. It criticised the controls and corruption in the administration. To refugees, the K.M.P.P. promised to pay adequate compensation. Shri. Kripalani also criticised Shri.

Nehru's foreign policy. He thought that Shri. Nehru's foreign policy cannot be put in any known category and that in claiming positive merits for it the Prime Minister was making a virtue of the country's helpless international position. The K.M.P.P. leaders complained of an "unholy alliance" between the Congress Party and government officials. Shri. Triloki Singh, leader of the state K.M.P.P., lodged a complaint with the Chief Election Officer of the state that the District Magistrate, who was also the Electoral Officer, and the Civil Surgeon of Lucknow and some of their subordinates actively participated in the election campaign of the Congress Party. The K.M.P.P. was strong in the districts of Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Faizabad, Sitapur and Barabanki. Posters, leaflets, public meetings were the principal means of propaganda adopted by the K.M.P.P. along with folk songs and cinema slides.

The election campaign of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh was launched by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, its President. He addressed a number of meetings in the state. The main burden of his speeches was that the Congress Party had failed to relieve the distress of the people; Shri. Nehru's charge of Hindu communalism against the Jan Sangh was false; the Congress Government was following a policy of appeasement of Pakistan; etc. He also advocated withdrawal of the Kashmir case from the United Nations. Dr. Mookerjee extended the support of his organisation to Shri. Nehru's opponent, Shri. Prabhudatt Brahmachari, who was contesting against the Prime Minister on the issue of the Hindu Code Bill.

To refugees, the Jan Sangh promised a reunion of India and Pakistan. To peasants, its spokesmen mentioned that the Sangh also was against landlordism and favoured its abolition. To the 14 per cent of Muslims, the Jan Sangh assured that the party believed in secularism and none need fear religious persecution under Jan Sangh rule. The Jan Sangh organisers were aware of the importance of the 14 per cent Muslim voters in the elections. To prove that it was not a communal organisation, Jan Sangh set up a Muslim candidate on its ticket from Bijnor. However, his nomination papers

were rejected by the Returning Officer on technical grounds. The Jan Sangh was effectively helped by the volunteers of the R.S.S. About 100,000 people were working for the Jan Sangh during the election period. The Deepak symbol of the Jan Sangh was printed on cards and distributed in thousands by volunteers. The party also took out Prabhat Pheries and organised variety shows and dramas in villages and towns to entertain the voters and make election propaganda.

The Hindu Mahasabha stood for Hindu Raj and Hindu culture. The Mahasabha's General Secretary, Mahant Digvijayanath, contested a House of the People seat from Gorakhpur district. In Gonda district, the Mahasabha candidates exploited the disturbed religious feelings of the people over the Babri Mosque incident in neighbouring Faizabad.

The Ram Rajya Parishad, according to its leader, Swami Karapatriji, stood for creation of a state based on moral laws. He felt that without such a state, peace and prosperity would not be achieved by "suffering humanity." The Parishad, said Swami Karapatriji at Sultanpur, did not stand for "Hindu Raj" or a state of any particular community or class. It stood for the establishment of a "religious impartial state" as against the Congress objective of secular democracy. Along with posters and handbills the Parishad also organised "Kirtans" for propagating its viewpoint. The Ram Rajya Parishad opposed the Hindu Code Bill and cow slaughter. Among women voters the election campaign of the Parishad was carried on by the U.P. Mahila Sangh.

The U.P. Praja Party, organised by landlords, was very critical of the party in power. In Uttar Pradesh there are some 22,00,000 small and big landlords and the party hoped to get a solid support from them. At Unnao, the Praja Party's leader, Shri. Jagdish Prasad, said that "five years of absolute power to the Congress had not done any good to the country." He said: "The Congress organisation was now a mere echo of the Prime Minister's views. If he wills that the Constitution be so amended as to deprive millions of the zamindars of their fundamental rights, the thing is done." Shri. Jagdish Prasad continued: "Another five years of unchallenged sway will make the country ripe for communism. We must reduce

the powers of such a party and we do not want power placed in the hands of one man." In his last appeal to the zamindars of U.P. on January 18, he called upon them to "vote against Congress candidates irrespective of personal considerations." The U.P. Praja Party's candidates depended on their personal prestige and resources for winning the elections more than for the support of their party's organisation.

Leftist parties did not organise their election campaign very well. The "leftist" campaign was confined to a few districts of eastern U.P. and to some few industrial centres. The Communist Party and the U.P. Revolutionary Socialist Party, the latter formed by a few dissidents from the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India, were particularly strong in the districts of Azamgarh, Ghaziabad and Ballia. They had some pockets in the industrial areas of the state also, particularly in the district of Kanpur.

In spite of its caste appeal, the Scheduled Castes Federation did not find much support among the 20 per cent Scheduled Castes electors of the state.

The Independents dominated the election scene in numbers: 989 contested for 375 seats in the Assembly alone. Most of the Independents were ex-Congressmen. Pandit Kunzru, an outstanding Liberal leader and Member of Parliament, contested for the House of the People from Agra. Some of the industrialists of U.P. also contested the elections as Independent candidates. In some cases they set up their own candidates and adopted a number of others from among the large number of Independents. This was particularly true in the district of Kanpur. The only ex-ruler contesting the election was the Rajmata of Tehri state, now merged in Tehri-Garhwal district of U.P. As an Independent candidate she contested the House of the People seat from the district and supported three Independents for the Assembly.

## POLLING AND ELECTION RESULTS

Polling began on January 22, when an electorate of 90 lakhs and 88 thousand went to the polls in 88 Assembly and 44 House of the People constituencies. In 84 Assembly



constituencies polling was held on January 25; in 73 constituencies on January 28; and in 86 on January 31. The remaining constituencies in the hilly districts went to the polls on February 18, 19 and 21.

Elections in U.P. were indeed a very mammoth affair. There were 12,000 polling stations, 35,000 polling booths and a staff of 125,000. Polling was not heavy, however, nearly 38 per cent of the total electorate voted in the elections to the Assembly and nearly 39 per cent voted in the elections to the House of the People.

There was not much rowdyism during the voting, at least on the scale expected. Jan Sangh and Congress workers clashed at a few places and in Lucknow (in one booth) voting was suspended for 20 minutes. But order was quickly restored by the police and polling went on smoothly from then on. Repolling was ordered at a dozen polling stations because of major irregularities or due to breaches of the peace. The polling ranged from 30 to 70 per cent in both the eastern and western districts. In the rural constituencies of the two western districts (Meerut and Muzaffarnagar) where the peasantry is rich and prosperous and women especially advanced, voting was over 70 per cent. In modern Lucknow, voting was below 50 per cent, while in the old city it was 60 to 70 per cent. In the neighbouring constituencies in the district, polling was at the 30 to 40 per cent level.

The Congress Party's victory was decisive. The Congress won 390 seats in the Assembly, 90 per cent of the total, leaving only 40 seats to its opponents. Out of the 86 House of the People seats, the Congress won 81. However, its poll was only 47 per cent of the total votes cast.

Special interest in the election was centered on the Prime Minister's constituency. Shri. Nehru's opponent, Shri. Prabhudatt Brahmachari, a Sadhu who had taken a vow of not speaking, was supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh, the Ram Rajya Parishad and also by several other individuals. He opposed Shri. Nehru on the issue of the Hindu Code Bill. Shri. Nehru spoke about the Code in his constituency. *The Statesman's* special representative reported

(Delhi, January 20, 1952) that "The Congress President's statements gave the impression that he was not fanatic about the Bill which was capable of adjustments." Shri. Nehru secured 233,571 votes while his opponent got 56,718 votes. Three other opponents of the Prime Minister forfeited their security deposits.

After the election result had been announced, the Sadhu said: "I am glad that Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru has been elected. Even if I were elected, I would have resigned in Shri Nehru's favour. I have always been with the Congress and shall ever remain with it. One thing I must clarify, that is Shri. Nehru and his Government must not interfere with religion and must abandon the Hindu Code Bill. I shall again raise my voice if they interfere with religion."

All Central and State Ministers who contested the elections were elected. The Socialist Party emerged as the second party in the state. It won 19 seats in the Assembly and two in the House of the People. Its top leader, Acharya Narendra Dev, was defeated in the election to the Assembly from his home constituency of Faizabad by his Congress rival on a margin of over 400 votes. Its sitting M.P., Shri. Damodar Swarup Seth, was also defeated by his Congress rival in the Bareilly House of the People constituency. The Socialists secured notable victories in the district of Deoria where they had conducted a campaign against eviction of peasants, winning four out of five Assembly seats.

The party which suffered the worst defeat was the K.M.P.P. All but one of its candidates were defeated. Its President, Acharya Kripalani, General Secretary Sadiq Ali, Prof. Shibban Lal Saxena, and Shri. Triloki Singh, its state chief, were all defeated badly.

The Jan Sangh got two seats, while the Mahasabha got only one in the Assembly. The Mahasabha also secured one seat in the House of the People from Gonda district. The U.P. Praja Party of landlords won two seats in the Assembly, and the U.P. Revolutionary Socialist Party of Jharkhande Rai won only one.

The Independents secured 14 seats in the Assembly and two in the House of the People. Prominent Independents,

like Pandit Kunzru and Shri. Haliwal, were defeated and so were the industrialists and their men who fought against the Congress Party in Kanpur.

In the district of Tehri-Garhwal, the Rajmata of former Tehri State, an Independent candidate for a seat in the House of the People, and three other Independent candidates supported by her for the Assembly, defeated their Congress rivals. No Congressman was returned from this district either to the Assembly or to the House of the People.

In the hilly district of Almora, Bhatias, residing near the Tibetan border, came in large numbers to cast their votes. Wearing multi-coloured woollen socks to withstand the rigours of the snows, groups of Bhatia women flocked to the booths singing their community songs.

Women out-numbered men at most of the polling stations in Ranikhet area of Nainital district. 15 women contested the elections to the House of the People. Only five of them have been elected. Three belonging to the Congress Party, one to the Hindu Mahasabha and the remaining one is an Independent. For the Assembly 39 women contested. Only 11 of them have been elected, all belonging to the Congress Party.

There are 37 Muslims in the new Assembly, 36 of them belong to the Congress Party and one is an Independent. The absence of the Muslim League in the election helped the Congress Party considerably. Muslim electors, 14 per cent of the total, voted solidly for Congress. Most of the ex-Muslim Leaguers have now joined the Congress Party and their presence in its ranks was useful in getting the Muslim vote.

Generally speaking the elections were conducted peacefully and efficiently. Election results in U.P. probably were affected by the results in other states where the elections were already over.

### CORRUPT PRACTICES IN THE ELECTIONS

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Chairman of the U.P. Socialist Party, said after the elections: "A conspiracy was hatched in Lucknow to distort the electoral verdict in U.P." The ballot boxes, he asserted, which could be opened without breaking the seals, had been tampered with. The state K.M.P.P. also

alleged a "deep-rooted conspiracy" in the manufacture of ballot boxes, without supporting its charge with proofs. The state Communist Party made allegations of "the use of every possible device, including coercion and intimidation of voters, bribery, unfair utilisation of the government machinery and other corrupt practices to nullify the verdict of the people." None of these charges has been supported with adequate proofs.

The *Times of India* correspondent reported (Delhi, February 11, 1952) as follows:

"The mark left by the indelible ink too, it has been found, could easily be erased. There have been cases of ballot boxes *found broken open though every care was taken to make them strong, light, durable, portable, safe and easily packable. There have been reports of defects in the boxes themselves. Sometimes the slits closed while polling was in progress. In two constituencies it was demonstrated that ballot boxes could be opened without breaking the seals. Complaints have been made that the counting rules were violated at places. At some stations ballot boxes were without outer symbols or names.*"

As far as the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, I and II (election expenditure, use of transport and propaganda near the polling booths) were concerned, every one knows that few persons cared to observe these rules.

## INFLUENCE OF CASTE

In U.P., caste and religious feelings exercised considerable influence in the final voting choices of the electorate.

1. Considerable importance was attached to the caste compositions of the constituencies in the selection of candidates by various parties. The Independents openly tried to exploit caste loyalties for getting votes.

2. In eastern districts, Congressmen organised a movement called "Shoshit Sangh" of downtrodden castes in order to get the votes of persons belonging to them. In western districts another caste movement "Ajgar," the five letters signifying five different castes and communities bound to-

gether by dislike of others, was organised by some of the candidates belonging to those castes. Since the size of constituencies was rather small in area, exploitation of caste and sub-caste feelings did pay.

3. A U.P. Sunni Leader asked the Sunni Muslims of the state to vote against the Congress Party. But in some cases there was agreement between Shia and Sunni Muslims to support Congress candidates. Thus Shri. Ali Zaheer, Minister for Justice and Excise who is a Shia, was supported both by Shia and Sunni Muslims in a Lucknow City Assembly constituency.

4. The votes of refugees (numbering about 4,75,000) and the Sikh community (about 10,00,000) were divided between the Congress Party and its communalist opponents.

5. Muslim voters, numbering about 14 per cent of the total, mostly voted for the Congress Party.

6. Most of the 20 per cent Scheduled Castes voters also voted for the Congress Party. Out of 83 seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the Assembly, 82 went to the Congress Party and the remaining 1 to an Independent. This shows that their caste party, the Scheduled Castes Federation, did not have much influence.

7. The Congress Party was anxious to give adequate representation to 14 Muslim electors of the state. In the new Assembly there are 37 Muslims, or 8.5 per cent of the total strength of the House. 36 of them belong to the Congress Party and the remaining one is an Independent.

8. Hindu Mahasabha candidates for the Assembly and for the House of the People from Gonda district successfully exploited the religious feeling of the people over the Babri Mosque incident in neighbouring Faizabad.

9. However, in general the attempt of the Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajya Parishad to arouse religious feelings and take their advantage in the elections did not succeed.

10. In the hilly districts of Almora, Nainital, Dehra Dun, Garhwal and Tehri-Garhwal, Brahman-non-Brahman feeling was rather strong. The Congress Party was opposed by non-Brahmans for its domination by Brahmins. Thakurs, who

are a majority community in these districts, opposed the Congress Party on the grounds that their interests were neglected by the Brahman leaders of the party. There also was a conflict between higher and lower sub-castes among the Brahmans themselves. These caste conflicts were exploited by all the contestants.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to say anything with definiteness about the future political development in this most important state in India.

*Opposition to the party in power probably will come mainly from the Socialist Party.* The Congress Party's percentage of seats won is very impressive, but not so its vote. The Congress has won 90 per cent of the seats on a minority vote. In a number of constituencies it has won by a very narrow margin. Therefore, it is quite possible that Congress opponents may give in the future a much better account of themselves than they did in the General Elections. But they will have to work very hard before they can hope to replace the Congress Party.

Another significant outcome of the elections is the complete rout of the extreme "left." Six leftist parties the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, U.P. Revolutionary Socialist Party, Forward Bloc (Ruikar) and the Bolshevik Party amongst themselves did not poll even two per cent of the total votes polled and won only one seat in the Assembly of 430 members. Communist gains in the South did not come to their help in Uttar Pradesh. The C.P.I. contested 43 seats for the Assembly and was unable to win even one. 39 of its 43 candidates forfeited their security deposits. It polled only 0.98% of the votes.

A slight shift in the voters' opinions may make a great change in the political picture of the state. Muslim voters helped the Congress Party decisively in winning its impressive victory. If an appreciable number of Muslim voters favour any other party, the Congress Party may suffer great losses.

# 9

## WEST BENGAL

D. N. BANERJEE  
Calcutta University, Calcutta

*Area: 30,775 sq. miles*

*Population: 2,48,10,308*

*Electorate: 1,24,97,714*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	34	238
Constituencies .. ..	26	187
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	1
Contesting candidates .. ..	148	1,373
Valid votes polled .. ..	76,13,932	74,44,225
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..	40.5	42

### POLITICAL PARTIES

The main party in the state is, of course, the Congress Party. It has a long record of service in the country's fight for Independence. Of all the parties in the state, the Congress has the most effective organisation. The fact that it was the party in power was of very great advantage to it in the election.

The Congress Party had been considerably weakened by continuous friction within its own ranks. The major breach was caused by the formation of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (K.M.P.P.) by Dr. P. C. Ghosh, former Chief Minister of West Bengal, and Dr. S. C. Banerjee, President of the West Bengal branch of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. This party took away a number of devoted Congress workers who were dissatisfied with the working of the

state Congress Committee and its Ministry, headed by Dr. B. C. Roy.

The Congress Party's prestige was at a low ebb as a result of losses suffered by it in local elections in Howrah and Chandernagore. These losses, however, served as a warning to the Congress Party. The party did not fail to take note of it. After the formation of the K.M.P.P., internal feuds within the party came to an end. Dr. B. C. Roy, who is known for his organisational skill and capacity for hard work, spared no pains to make the Congress Ministry more active and to shake *the party out of inertia and complacency*. Thus, by the time the elections came, the party was much better organised than its opponents realised.

Next to the Congress in West Bengal comes the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.). The C.P.I. had been particularly active in the state since 1948 when in Calcutta its Second Party Congress decided to embark upon a policy of what is now called "left sectarianism." Calcutta was chosen as the centre of its activities. The party tried to secure the support of the Bengali middle classes and industrial workers. Its policy of adventurism attracted to it a large number of young Bengali students. The C.P.I. has always had a much better organisation than any other left wing party in West Bengal. Thus it was able to exploit the anti-Congress feeling among the people much more effectively than other left parties.

Among other left parties, the K.M.P.P. was the most important. At one time it was felt that the K.M.P.P. might emerge as the main opposition party in the state Assembly. The honour, however, has gone to the Communist Party. The K.M.P.P. was the official opposition in pre-election West Bengal State Legislative Assembly. Its leader Dr. S. C. Banerjee, was also the President of the state branch of the I.N.T.U.C.; it was expected that the party would win most of the seats where the labour vote was decisive. Election results, however, proved that the industrial workers of West Bengal did not support the K.M.P.P.

The Socialist Party is very weak. It had made an electoral alliance with the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (R.C.P.I.) of Shri. Saumyendranath Tagore, and the



Forward Bloc (Subhasist) led by Shrimati Leela Roy. The alliance was known as the People's United Socialist Front.

Other splinter parties of the left, like the United Socialist Organisation (U.S.O.), the Socialist Republican Party started by the late Shri. Saratchandra Bose, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India (R.S.P.I.), the Bolshevik Party and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) led by Shri. Sheelbhadra Yaji, had arrived at an electoral understanding with the Communist Party, even though there was no official "united front." Efforts to create such a front had failed because of disagreement between the parties on certain seats.

Communal parties, like the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad, were the least organised parties in the state. The Jan Sangh was organised a few months before the election by Dr. S. P. Mookerjee. The Mahasabha is one of the oldest parties in the state, but is very weak.

The Gurkha League, which contested four seats for the state Assembly and one for the House of the People, is confined to Darjeeling only. It draws its support from the Gurkha community of the district.

This complicated party picture was further confused by the Independents, hundreds of whom contested the elections to the state Assembly and to the House of the People.

## ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION ISSUES

The chief means of the election campaign of various parties was public meetings. One general impression given by these meetings was that while the leaders of the Congress Party generally avoided any vilification of the non-Congress political parties or their leaders, the one thing on which the latter agreed, in spite of all ideological differences amongst themselves, was in their condemnation of the Congress as a political organisation, and the condemnation of the Congress Government, both at the Centre and in the states of the Indian Union. The partition of India and India's acceptance of membership in the Commonwealth of Nations were severely condemned, and demands were made for the annulment of

partition, for the immediate severance of India's connection with the Commonwealth, and also for the abolition of landlordism without compensation. The opposition parties contended that none of the pressing problems of the country could be solved if the Congress Party continued to remain in power. Inefficient administration, lack of security in employment, growing hunger, corruption, black marketing, etc., were some of the targets on which opposition parties concentrated their fire.

The Congress Party, on the other hand, claimed that it was working for an orderly transformation of the present society. Its emphasis was on order and stability. It claimed that Shri. Nehru's foreign policy of dynamic neutrality was most beneficial to the country.

Apart from public meetings, parties used cinema slides, processions, singing squads, leaflets, and door-to-door contacts for election propaganda. Posters and other election literature were distributed in large quantities by contesting candidates and their political parties.

In hilly Kalimpong the election campaign was "democratic." Meetings were held in the only public square of the town and were addressed by all party spokesmen. Every speaker was cheered by the listeners who enjoyed this rare phenomenon of joint meetings addressed by people violently opposed to each other.

## ELECTIONS RESULTS

After a hectic campaign which had lasted for more than two months, the electorate in West Bengal went to the polls on January 3, 1952. Polling continued for three weeks. At the end of polling it was found that the Congress Party had won the election. Its victory came as a surprise not only to its opponents, but also to some of its friends. Out of 238 seats in the West Bengal legislative Assembly, the Congress Party captured as many as 150 seats. In the elections to the House of the People the Congress Party won 24 out of 34 seats allocated to West Bengal. The party won spectacular support from the industrial workers. Twenty-one con-

stituencies in the state had a majority of labour voters. In 18 of these the Congress Party won, showing that it was supported by a large majority of industrial workers of the state.

Most victories were secured by the Congress Party in rural areas, and particularly in the northern districts of the state. It was also solidly supported by the minority communities. Muslim voters helped the Congress win in Nadia, Malda, Murshidabad and West Dinajpur districts. The party won all the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, thus demonstrating the fact that it commands the support of all the minority communities in the state.

The Congress Party in West Bengal, however, also won the distinction of having the largest number of its Ministers defeated at the polls. Seven out of twelve Ministers contesting elections to the state Legislature Assembly were defeated mostly by leftist parties. The Congress Party also suffered surprising defeats in Midnapore district, which was regarded as a safe district for the party before the election. In this district it won only 12 out of 35 seats. It must also be noted here that even though the Congress Party won more than 68 per cent of seats in the state legislature, it secured a little over 38 per cent of the total votes polled. The election results also showed that the Congress Party failed to win the support of the middle class of West Bengal.

None of these facts, however, minimises the significance of the victory of the Congress Party. Several factors contributed to its success. In the first place, there was the prestige of the Congress as the oldest All-India political organisation. Its age, its record of service in the past, its role in India's struggle for Independence, the sufferings and sacrifices of Congressmen during this struggle, and the fact that the Congress Party was in possession of political power in the country—all these imparted to it a special position of pre-eminence among the political parties in the state. Moreover, many people honestly believed, in spite of all that was said against it, that the Congress alone really stood for both progress and order and stability in the country, and that the

party which had done so much to win political freedom, should be placed in power once more, at least, to consolidate that freedom and put through its programme of reconstruction. It must also not be forgotten that the human mind is ordinarily averse to change, particularly when that change might mean some uncertainty and even a state of chaos and disorder.

Secondly, the Congress Party had a fairly well-knit organisation with wide ramifications, and had command over resources both in man-power and money. This enabled it to conduct its election campaign effectively and even to neutralise, to a certain extent, the prejudice and passion that had been created against it by the persistent propaganda of non-Congress parties. It may, however, be added that, in point of discipline and organisational efficiency, perhaps the Communist Party alone was a match for it—if not more than a match for it—although the C.P.I. did not command the same resources in man-power and money-power.

A third factor which contributed to the success of the Congress Party in the General Elections—and this also applied, more or less, to the success of some other parties—was the bewildering multiplicity of parties, and also the multiplicity of candidates in it. In the city of Calcutta alone, for example, with an electorate of about 15,00,000 there were as many as 231 (235 according to one report) candidates for 26 state Assembly seats. The parties contesting the elections were: the Congress, the K.M.P.P., the Jan Sangh, the Socialist Party, the C.P.I., the Forward Bloc (Marxist), the Forward Bloc (Subhasist), the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India, the United Socialist Organisation, the Socialist Republican Party, the Bolshevik Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, the United Progressive Bloc, the National Synthesis Party, and the Democratic Vanguard. Besides, there were also 119 Independent candidates who did not belong to any political party. Most of the seats were contested by a large number of candidates. For instance there were as many as 16 candidates in the single-member constituency of Muchipara (Calcutta) for the West Bengal

## WEST BENGAL

state Legislative Assembly. As it generally happens in a multi-cornered electoral contest in which only a relative majority of votes polled is required to win a seat, in the elections in West Bengal also, as in many other parts of the country, often a candidate would win a seat in a single-member constituency with a minority of votes actually polled. This applied as much to Congress candidates as to the candidates of other political parties. For instance, in one single-member constituency in which the Congress, the Jan Sangh and some other candidates fought against one another, a Communist candidate slipped through them triumphant. It is not, therefore, surprising that although the Congress Party won 150 seats out of 238 elective seats in the state Legislative Assembly, it obtained less than 29,00,000 votes out of more than 74,00,000 votes actually polled. Such electoral vagaries or anomalies are inevitable in multi-cornered contests in which only a relative majority of votes is required to win a seat.

## CONCLUSIONS

The first general elections evoked great enthusiasm among the people of West Bengal. Apart from public meetings, poster campaigns, demonstrations and street parades, there was in almost all constituencies a house-to-house canvassing by candidates or by their supporters. In many places women also played an important part in this canvassing business.

The percentage of voting varied from place to place. In some areas it was between 25 and 30, and in some areas it was over 70. It is interesting to note in this connection that the rural voters, generally speaking, showed keener interest in the elections than the urban voters. Women voters in many constituencies also showed great interest. In one constituency an old woman, it was reported in the Press, walked several miles to cast her vote.

The elections were not entirely free from cases of corruption in the form of bribery and impersonation in some urban areas. The election authorities, however, made every

effort to enable the voters to exercise their franchise freely and without any undue interference from the administration.

The elections were not altogether free from the influence of casteism, communalism, and provincialism. In many places candidates were given nomination by different political parties chiefly in consideration of their caste, religion, or place of birth. For instance, if in any constituency voters belonging to a particular caste predominated, then a person belonging to that caste was given nomination. Again, if in any constituency there were a large number of people from East Bengal (East Pakistan), then a nomination was given to a refugee from East Bengal. It may also be noted here that, generally speaking, although there might have been exceptions here and there, the principle of residence in a particular constituency, or of material interest therein, was a governing factor in the nomination of candidates by different political parties.

The unexpected success of the Communist Party needs an explanation. The success of the Communist Party was not so much due to any love for that party or its ideology as to the hatred of the Congress Party and the Congress Governments, both at the Centre and in the states, including West Bengal. This hatred had been generated by a very skilfully conducted propaganda against the Congress, carried on for months before the elections by all non-Congress parties. They exploited the deep discontent because of the high prices of the necessities of life and the refugee problem to their full advantage. They attributed these high prices to the 'Congress policy of exploitation of the masses' for the advantage of a few rich black-marketeers and profiteers who, in return, 'secretly contributed' enormous sums of money to the election funds of the Congress Party. Even a section of the Press in West Bengal materially contributed by its writings to the creation of a feeling of hatred against the Congress. The problem of the Hindu community in East Pakistan and the refugees' grievances were fully exploited for attacking the party in power. At the initial stage, there was no effective counter-propaganda from the Congress side. As a result, many people believed what had been said against the

Congress Party. It may be interesting to note here—and this was practically admitted by the political parties concerned—that many non-Congress parties carried on propaganda against the Congress Party in their own interest, but that only the sly Communist Party took full advantage of the prejudice thus created against the Congress Party. Many persons argued that if the Congress Party was to be ousted from power, then its place should be taken not by any moderate, or middle-of-the-road, or conservative party, but by an extremist party like the Communist Party of India. Thus many non-Congress parties sowed the seeds and the Communist Party reaped the harvest.

Finally, it should be stated that, on the whole, the General Elections were free from violence and rowdyism. In the early stages of the election campaign there was some trouble in one or two places, but public opinion in the state strongly condemned this, and thereafter the election propaganda was carried on peacefully by all political parties. This is certainly a tribute to the innate good sense and the law-abiding instinct of the people.

The elections were not without their humorous side. The importance of bullocks in the economy of West Bengal is well-known, and the symbol of yoked bullocks adopted by the Congress Party attracted a large number of voters in rural areas. On the other hand, the symbol of sickle and the ear of corn adopted by the C.P.I. particularly appealed to many Hindu women voters in those areas. The ear of corn, they said represented *Lakshmi*, the Goddess of Wealth. Some of these women voters would first bow with folded hands before the ballot box of the Communist Party and then cast their votes in favour of the Communist candidates. There were other interesting incidents. Into a polling booth in the district of 24-Parganas walked a village farmer whose bulls and cart had long served him well. He therefore, wanted "to vote for candidates who had bulls (Congress) and a cart (Independent) as their symbols." When he was told that he could vote for only one candidate, he replied, "then I shall vote for none," and left the polling station in disgust to the applause of other voters. In another polling booth a

male voter insisted that his wife must vote for a particular candidate. His wife, however, wanted to vote for a candidate of her own choice. The couple quarrelled in front of the polling booth to the amusement of a large number of other voters, and then returned home without casting their votes. In yet another polling booth a middle-aged upcountry voter insisted on having an additional vote recorded on behalf of his wife who could not come to cast her vote. The Presiding Officer "had to argue with him for about fifteen minutes to convince him that it was a strictly personal right and could not be transferred in any way." There were also some victims of the printer's devil among the electorate. According to a press report, the wrong recording of sex deprived about a dozen South Indian voters of their right to exercise their franchise in a polling centre in the Titghar constituency in the sub-division of Barrackpore.

With adult suffrage and in the present state of literacy in the country, such things as have been referred to above, are inevitable. Yet it has to be admitted that, on the whole, the first experiment in democracy in the country has been successful. There is no reason to doubt that the exercise of responsibility will call forth the capacity for it.



# 10 HYDERABAD

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*Area: 82,168 sq. miles*  
*Population: 1,86,55,108*  
*Electorate: 1,035,497*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	25	175
Constituencies .. ..	21	142
Uncontested seats .. ..	2	4
Contesting candidates .. ..	70	560
Valid votes polled .. ..	48,54,862	51,78,593
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..	44.7	41.7

## INTRODUCTORY

The elections in Hyderabad State were held between December 21, 1951 and January 18, 1952. The total electorate of Hyderabad was 90,35,497 of whom women voters numbered 40,58,728. In the electorate there were 12,61,400 Muslim voters including 5,67,630 women. Voters belonging

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to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes numbered 14,58,538 men and 1,21,377 women.

The arrangements made for the conduct of the elections were satisfactory throughout as is evidenced by the comparative absence of any serious criticism or complaint. Proof of this was furnished by the fact that in some district constituencies polling was phenomenally high, the percentage being incomparably higher than even in the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Nearly 9000 polling stations were provided on the basis of one for every 1000 voters, and it was arranged that no voter travelled more than a couple of miles in the districts to reach a polling station. The election authorities must also be congratulated on the fairness and impartiality that were ensured throughout the elections and for the effort made by them through the Press, the radio and mock elections to educate the voters in their duties and responsibilities. The declaration of the results of the elections and the disposal of cases of election disputes, few as they were, were very prompt and put no candidate at any *disadvantage*.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The parties which contested the elections in the state either to the Assembly or to the House of the People or both, apart from Independent candidates, were: 1. The Congress; 2. The Socialists; 3. The Peoples Democratic Front; 4. The Peasants and Workers; 5. The Hindu Mahasabha; 6. The Republican Party; 7. The Scheduled Castes Federation; 8. The Depressed Classes Association; 9. The United Scheduled Castes Federation; 10. The Praja Party; 11. The Ram Rajya Parishad; 12. The Bharatiya Jan Sangh; 13. The Independent League; and 14. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party.

Of these parties the Peoples Democratic Front, the Depressed Classes Association, the United Scheduled Castes Federation and the Praja Party are purely local parties which concentrated for the most part on local issues or appealed to local sentiment, as in the case of the Praja Party. The results of the election have clearly shown that of these

local parties the Peoples Democratic Front mainly consisting of the left wing elements in the state has been by far the most successful. It has captured 42 out of the 78 Assembly seats which it contested. This represents a higher ratio of seats won to seats contested in comparison with the Congress Party which won 93 seats out of the 173 it contested. The average of votes polled by the P.D.F. candidates in constituencies where they contested was 13,861, which is not only higher than the average for the Congress (12,797) but the highest among all parties. These significant facts are attributable in our opinion to the concentration of their election efforts by the P.D.F. in selected areas such as Telangana where they are unquestionably influential. It is also noteworthy that polling was phenomenally heavy in constituencies where the P.D.F. candidates stood, unlike in constituencies where they did not. We have no means of judging whether this phenomenon is to be set down to the extraordinary popularity of the P.D.F., or to their superior electioneering tactics and organisation; to the weakness of their rivals, or to intimidatory practices alleged to have been resorted to by them. But the conclusion supported by the results of the elections, whatever the reasons, is that the P.D.F. is indisputably powerful in the three districts of Karimnagar, Nalgonda and Warangal. This, taken together with the fact that the successes of the Communist Party in four districts of Madras (Andhra) were overwhelming, entitles us to the inference that if a separate Andhra State were to be set up, the Communists would emerge as the largest political party. In the Hyderabad State Assembly they constitute, along with their allies in the P.D.F., the main opposition to-day. It must be pointed out here that though the Peoples Democratic Front is formed by a merger of leftist groups in the state, the preponderant element in it is the old Communist Party and its ideological inspiration is unmistakably communist. For election purposes it found it expedient to ally with parties and individuals who were out to defeat the Congress Party.

Another significant fact, however, about the P.D.F. is that some of its top-leaders, like Dr. N. M. Jayasurya and

Shri. Makhdoom Mohiuddin who chose to contest from the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad were defeated by their Congress rivals. Similar was the fate of the Socialist leader, Shri. Mahadev Singh. This probably confirms our feeling that while the Congress contested more seats and enjoys a more widespread following, the P.D.F.'s strength is localised in certain areas. The election propaganda of the P.D.F. was directed primarily against the policies and programme of the Congress Governments. Criticism centred round inefficiency and corruption in the administration, the untenability of the Prime Minister's foreign policy, the food problem, the dominance of the capitalist class, etc. But the main part of the P.D.F. attack was concentrated on local issues. For instance, it advocated the deposition of the Nizam, the disintegration of the state on a linguistic basis, the carrying out of drastic and far-reaching land reforms involving non-payment of compensation to dispossessed landowners, the nationalisation of industry, etc.

Among the other local parties, some of which sprang into existence on the eve of elections, none deserves serious mention. All that need be said is that the parties were themselves very diffident of success as may be seen from the very small number of seats contested by them and the very small size of their following. None of these local parties won even a single seat.

## ELECTION RESULTS

The Congress Party won 93 out of the 173 seats it contested and as such it has secured a majority in the Assembly, albeit with a very narrow margin. It is noticeable that while the Congress Party virtually swept the polls in the neighbouring Bombay State and in Uttar Pradesh, its candidates were returned only to the extent of 53% of the total number of the members of the local Assembly. This is remarkable when viewed against the fact that the Congress Party is not only the oldest but historically symbolises the freedom movement in India as a whole and the struggle for democratisation in Hyderabad. This either shows a serious rift within the Congress ranks, organisational neglect and in-

adequacy or administrative inefficiency, or it may reflect on the disillusionment of the voters in the change of the attitude of the Congress Party in many matters, or disappointment at what it has been able to accomplish so far. There is no doubt that the local Congress leadership of the Congress Party is not of the same calibre as in several other states and group rivalries have definitely contributed to its organisational weakness. But the real cause for the Congress failures in certain local areas is to be sought in the superior strength of the P.D.F. in those areas.

The Congress either did not or could not influence the voters in Telangana. This is not surprising considering that even the Army and the Police have only a modest success to their credit in bringing law and order to that area. Except for Telangana, the Congress Party has done quite well. Pandit Nehru's Presidentship of the Congress was without doubt a decisive factor in whatever success the Congress Party achieved in Hyderabad. It neglected no community or economic section in the scope of its electioneering campaign. Its candidates were selected after a process of careful scrutiny at Delhi, and with due regard to the claims of minorities especially Muslims, women and Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

The successful Congress candidates included several Muslims although it may be asserted that the number of their representatives did not come anywhere near their actual proportion in the population of the state. The election has again demonstrated that it represents the Scheduled Castes more truly and adequately than any other party, not excluding those parties that have specifically been created to safeguard their interests like the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Depressed Classes Association. The defeat of the Scheduled Castes Federation leader Shri. Subbiah and the election of a number of Scheduled Castes candidates on the Congress tickets confirms this view. The Congress Party in Hyderabad raised few local issues which were not in any way involved in their All-India programmes. Their silence on the question of the deposition of the Nizam and the linguistic redistribution of the state was quite significant and

was promptly exploited by their rivals.

A notable feature of the elections in Hyderabad, which however is not peculiar to this state, is the rout of the Socialist Party. Although they contested 98 Assembly seats, they won only 11. This is probably due to their organisational weakness and comparative mediocrity of leadership and to their programme being rather academic and unrealistic. Their insistence on preserving their ideological purity shown by their determined refusal to make common cause with other parties interested like them in defeating the Congress was in our opinion a potent cause of their failure. Since the elections, however, their readiness to enter into arrangements with other parties has become noticeable, especially in Madras, where ideological purity is no longer stressed. So far as local issues were concerned, the party made much of the deposition of the Nizam and disintegration of the state and the carrying out of land reforms. But since these items figured prominently in the P.D.F. programme as well, the wind was taken out of the Socialist sails, as it were. If the Socialists had entered into election alliances with others, or had concentrated their election efforts in chosen areas, it is possible that the magnitude of their failure would have been less striking and less demoralising.

Coming to the Independent candidates, they shared the fate of the Socialists. Perhaps Hyderabad is among the few states (like Madras) where a phenomenally large number of candidates contested the elections as Independents. But unlike some other states, in Hyderabad they fared very badly, as may be seen from the fact that out of 131 Independents only 14 were elected. From the point of view of the development of the party system in the state, this experience may be regarded as wholesome. The election of considerable numbers of Independent candidates could either result in unstable Ministries, or crossing of the floor in search of the loaves and fishes of office, as is already evident in some states.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Some of the general conclusions we arrived at in our

investigations are set forth below:

1. The electorate has unequivocally and absolutely rejected communal and sectional politics, as may be seen from the fate of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Scheduled Castes Federation, etc. This we regard as a tremendous political advance in the country, in general, and our state in particular.

2. The minorities have received appreciable representation both in the choice of candidates and in the formulation of programmes.

3. Women interested themselves in the elections as voters, candidates and canvassers.

4. The economic aspects of party programmes received greater popular attention than the regional, the linguistic, the communal or the purely sentimental aspects.

5. The personality of the leaders was one of the important factors that influenced the results. Thus while two Congress General Secretaries and the Mayor of Hyderabad were defeated in constituencies where the Congress was regarded as strong and some top ranking leaders of the other parties were also defeated, leaders of unimpeachable eminence were elected in some areas where their parties were not particularly popular.

6. The election campaigns of the various parties were conducted with the minimum of bitterness and personal rancour.

7. The forms of propaganda were on the whole satisfactory.

8. No incidents of clashes or violence were reported.

9. The Press was informative and took a great interest in the campaign.

10. The administrative machinery of the elections was above reproach.

11. No members of the ruling family contested the elections.

On the whole the elections in Hyderabad State were a great success, considering that this was the first time in the state's history that elections on this scale were held. This augurs well for the future.

## ANALYSIS OF A RANDOM SAMPLE OF VOTERS

During the very limited time at our disposal a random sample of 160 voters only could be utilised. The actual number of those who were interviewed was large, but in many cases interviews could not be completed and there were some who would not permit, for some reason or other, that any notes of their interview should be taken down. The conclusions embodied in the report are based entirely on these exhaustive interviews, and such impressions as were not thus supported in the course of our field work have been kept separate. For the purpose of our interviews, we utilised a questionnaire specially prepared for the purpose.

The composition of the sample according to religion and sex was as follows:

	Total	Men	Women
Hindus	95	70	25
Muslims	60	50	10
Others (Christians including Anglo- Indians and Parsis)	5	3	2

According to religion and economic stratification the sample was composed as follows:

	Hindus	Muslims	Others
Upper Class	18	8	1
Middle Class	32	12	1
Lower Class	45	40	3

The terms 'upper', 'middle' and 'lower' class are used in the elastic sense in which they are used and understood in the state. None of the voters belonging to the upper and middle classes was illiterate. Out of the 88 men and women from the lower class only 28 were literate, 6 having some knowledge of English.

All people of the upper class and most of the middle class who were interviewed knew that their names were on



the electoral rolls. Several voters remarked that, even if they were indifferent, people from different parties pestered them and told them that their names were there and that they must vote for them. In the lower classes, however, the number of people who knew this was small, their general remark was: "All are going out to vote. If the names of some are on the list the names of others must also be there." Lower class women were often quite sure that their names were there, but for a very different reason. "As our name is on the ration card it must be on the voting list as well. If we don't go and vote our cards will be taken away and we will not get the rations."

Regarding the legislative bodies for which elections were being held, most people knew that elections were for two 'assemblies'—one at Delhi and the other at Hyderabad. Several lower class women thought that elections were being held for three assemblies—"two bullocks", "tree" and "hand", these being the symbols of the Congress, Socialists and the Peoples Democratic Front respectively.

The names of the prominent political parties in the election field were generally well-known, although in all classes the difference between the Socialists and the Communists was not clearly understood. The Jan Sangh, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the local parties were known to very few. Influential Independents were known better. Knowledge of party programmes was very inadequate in many cases. Hardly eleven people could give all the particulars regarding the approach of different parties on the question of nationalisation of industries—its degree and stages, or on the problem of linguistic provinces—particularly whether they should be formed right now or later or never. Regarding parties people have certain vague notions and generally accepted theories—stereotypes—such as "Congress won freedom for our land," "Congress is the hand-maid of the rich," "Communists are the true friends of the poor" or "Communists are the stooges of the Russians." The attitudes of the people, in general, were expressed in such set opinions. All, but a very few, did not very much like answering the question which sought to discover whether they understood well the fundamentals

of the policies of different parties. The attitudes of the local parties and Independents on these major questions were not known. Very few people could exactly point out the difference between the Socialists and the Communists.

In answer to the query "should a voter vote for an Independent candidate?" only three people categorically said "yes." About twenty people said: "Some good Independents must always be sent to the legislative bodies." Many thought that Independents are at best a nuisance and only party men should be elected. However the majority opinion appeared to be: "If the Independent is of exceptional merit, by all means elect an Independent candidate, otherwise it is safe to vote for the party you like best." The lower class people interviewed in course of the survey almost wholly supported the idea of voting for a party candidate.

The criteria on which a vote is actually given to one candidate against the other was not very easy to investigate. Persistence of the investigators was, however, rewarded by the answers which were received. Among the upper class voters who were interviewed, preference was equally divided between "party manifesto" and the "quality of the candidates" as the most important single factor. The better educated middle class people also thought the same. The lesser educated middle class people and the lower class people gave the following order of preference: Leaders of the party, party manifesto and quality of the candidates. The number of people voting frankly on religious, linguistic or provincial grounds, only, was insignificantly small. Many people added: "These are important considerations, but not the most important." About 44% of the people interviewed said that they considered the religion, language and provincial origin of the candidate also, but other considerations—party affiliations, party programme and past record of the candidates—should also not be overlooked.

Among the upper class people interviewed, all claimed to read some newspaper or other. In the second group about 6% said that they did not read any paper; although many more confessed that they did not read them very regularly. Most of the people read only one paper and as such it was

no use asking them the name of their favourite paper. A good porportion of the educated youth indicated their preference for a paper of the sensational variety like 'Blitz,' 'Atom' or 'Current.'

The question : "If you like a candidate but dislike his party, would you vote for him?" was rather intriguing. Only 140 answers to this question were received. Out of these 60 would vote for the candidate even though they disliked his party; 80 would vote for the party. To the other question : "If you like a party but dislike a candidate, would you vote for him?" 64 out of 140 voters said "yes", 35 said, "we will not vote at all" and the rest said, "we will vote for the best candidate."

The result of the elections and the preference of those interviewed unfortunately do not tally. Eighty-six out of 160 voters in the "sample" voted for the Congress candidates and this proportion is nearly the same as that between the successful Congress candidates to the total members of the Assembly. But in the case of other parties there is a certain amount of discrepancy. Forty voters with P.D.F. affiliations and 32 with Socialist bearings were interviewed, and it was noticeable that among them were some who, in spite of their preferences, voted for Independent candidates because they thought it was the lesser of the two evils!

# II

# MADHYA BHARAT

**S. R. SHARMA**  
*Victoria College, Gwalior*

*Area: 46,478 sq. miles*  
*Population: 79,54,154*  
*Electorate: 40,90,857*

		House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats	.. ..	11	99
Constituencies	.. ..	9	79
Uncontested seats	.. ..	—	1
Contesting candidates	.. ..	38	439
Valid votes polled	.. ..	19,53,571	19,87,410
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..			
		35	34.6

## INTRODUCTORY

The State of Madhya Bharat came into being as a result of the integration of Gwalior, Indore and 20 other small states of central India whose rulers signed a covenant to this effect in Delhi on April 22, 1948. That is how a population of about 80 lakhs, spread over an area of about 47,000 square miles, came under one unit of administration. Its formal inauguration was declared by the Prime Minister of India on May 28, 1948 at Gwalior in the midst of great rejoicing.

In November of 1949 His Highness the Rajpramukh declared in the state Assembly that the new Constitution of the Indian Republic would be applicable in its entirety to Madhya Bharat. Accordingly, from January 26, 1950, the state of Madhya Bharat commenced its constitutional rela-

tionship with the Union Government as one of the Part 'B' states.

## NOMINATIONS

As many as 682 persons filed nomination papers for the state Legislative Assembly and 68 for the House of the People. Out of the Assembly candidates, 243 persons either subsequently withdrew, or their nomination papers were rejected. Out of the Parliamentary candidates, 30 persons either withdrew, or their nominations were rejected. Thus those left in the field were : 439 candidates for the state Legislative Assembly, including 9 women and 7 Muslims; and 38 candidates for the House of the People, including one woman who contested from two constituencies.

Certain complaints regarding the partiality shown by election officers came in from a number of parties. A Hindu Mahasabha candidate's contention that no Congress nominations were rejected was unfounded, because in Shajapur (Rajgarh Parliamentary constituency), for instance, the nomination of the scheduled caste Congress candidate was rejected. A study of nominations accepted and rejected does not, however, give the impression that all returning officers acted uniformly.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

Besides eight All-India parties (the Congress, the Socialist, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Communists, the Jan Sangh, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Scheduled Castes Federation), two local parties, the Bharat Bhoomi Sangh and the Kisan Congress Samiti, contested the elections. The All-India parties approached the electorate with their national manifestos, and more or less reproduced their masters' voices, while the local parties, with jagirdari bias and zamindari leanings, talked mostly of rural uplift and agrarian reforms. But they failed to carry conviction to the masses and drew a blank in the elections. Similar was the fate of three All-India parties, namely the

Communist Party, the K.M.P.P. and the Scheduled Castes Federation.

### ELECTORAL ALLIANCES

Attempts to secure electoral alliances between the parties fighting the Congress did not go beyond preliminaries. An interim agreement between the Socialists and the S. C. Federation, as in Bombay, could not materialise in Madhya Bharat, because several factors, personal as well as ideological, did not allow these parties to effect an alliance. Even if they had joined hands with each other, their combined strength in some constituencies would not have caused any material difference in the chances of Congress victories because of the popularity of the Congress in those regions. But these parties chose to fight independently. So there were instances of the Socialists fighting the K.M.P. Party in three constituencies, and the S. C. Federation at another three places. The same was the case with the three communal organisations, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the R.R.P., which fought each other in several constituencies. Though it was only at one or two places where candidates belonging to all the three parties were in the field, there were contests between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jan Sangh at three places; between the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.R.P. at six places; and at sixteen places between the Jan Sangh and the R.R.P.

One thing in this connection is worth noting. Although there was no electoral alliance as such between the communal parties fighting the Congress, yet a prominent Jagirdar of Gwalior, who having contested and lost a Parliamentary seat on the R.R.P. ticket, was adopted by the Hindu Mahasabha as its candidate for the Council of States. Consequently he was sent to the upper house of Parliament, as a Sabhaite, having been duly elected by the Mahasabha legislators of the state Assembly.

### ELECTIONEERING

Election campaigns launched by various parties were more or less on the same lines as followed elsewhere, with

the difference that in Madhya Bharat emphasis was given more on vocal propaganda than on pamphleteering. Besides explaining their All-India party programmes, the various political parties placed before the electorate some state problems. With hardly an exception, every group tried to exploit moral sentiments and social susceptibilities. The two main planks in the Hindu Mahasabha propaganda were opposition to cow-slaughter and to the Hindu Code Bill, the stress being laid on the former; cow-slaughter, as a matter of fact, was banned practically in all the princely states now integrated into Madhya Bharat. The Congress, to refute its opponents' arguments, broadcast over the country-side printed copies and translations of relevant sections in the M.B. Statutes on cow-slaughter and on the Hindu Code Bill.

It was a strange coincidence that there was a striking resemblance between the Sabha's election symbol—a rider on his charger—and the equestrian statue of the late Maharaja of Gwalior which stood in the heart of the city. Political capital was made out of this accidental similarity; the circumstance was exploited to make the people feel that the Sabhaites carried with them the goodwill of the Rajpramukh. Another important point exploited by the political parties to meet their own ends was the policy of grain procurement by levy, which was the cause of much harassment to the peasants in this surplus state.

Socialists declared their intention to abolish the distinction between Part 'A' and Part 'B' states; to reduce the ex-rulers' privy purses; to expand educational facilities, especially in the technical sphere; to improve the residential accommodation for the students; to introduce prohibition in the tribal areas, where a couple of years ago they had led a symbolic movement for prohibition; and lastly to support the speedy erection of *Samadhis* of those students who were killed in the police firing two years back.

Jan Sangh and other party candidates spoke mostly in terms of their All-India programmes, except that the former promised to set up a broadcasting station in Madhya Bharat.

Congress and Socialist propaganda tried to make an honest attempt to bring home to the people some hard poli-

tical and economic truths of modern life. They discussed the conflicting demands of urban citizens and the rural population when dealing with the problem of high living costs and high prices. Cloth scarcity and want of other essential necessities of life were explained in terms of all-India conditions, and various other factors responsible for the present crisis. But Congressmen, one observed, were rather apologetic in their utterances, whereas Socialists were forceful.

As regards the voters, party labels seemed to have little appeal. Save in urban areas, they failed to understand, much less appreciate, party policies and programmes embracing all India. In his choice, the voter was guided mainly by the personality of the individual candidate, or by considerations of caste or community, or perhaps by cheap appeals addressed to comparatively small problems troubling the area.

Attempts to disturb meetings of rival parties or candidates were very, very few, but stone throwing at Ministers' cars (or such other mischief) was allegedly a frequent complaint. No major incident marred the peaceful conduct of elections. Supporters of communal organisations did actually harass some voters of other parties as well as rural candidates. At several places, police intervention was called for to nip the mischief in the bud.

At times the propaganda conducted by the parties took very crude forms. For example, in one constituency, the Jan Sangh and the K.M.P.P. indulged in a sort of wordy warfare. The rivals attacked each other over loud speakers fitted to two balconies exactly opposite one another. "The light is out," said the K.M.P.P. man referring to the lamp, the election symbol of the Jan Sangh. "It has lit the hut," came the retort from the Jan Sangh, the hut being the symbol of the K.M.P.P. Slogans accusing the Hindu Mahasabha of being 'Gandhiji's murderer' were replied to in some places with slogans accusing the Congress of being the 'murderer of students,' the reference being to the firing on students of Gwalior a couple of years ago.

## POLLING ARRANGEMENTS

The entire state was divided into 59 single-member and



20 double-member constituencies for the state Assembly and the constituencies were so grouped as to form 7 single-member and 2 double-member constituencies for the House of the People. A rural single-member constituency for the state Legislature, on an average, extended over an area of between 400 and 500 square miles, except in Bhind District which, being thickly populated, was split in constituencies extending over between 200 and 300 sq. miles. The main guiding factor for the determination of constituencies was voting strength, the average in respect of which in the case of single-member constituencies of the state Legislature worked out at 41,269 and in the case of the House of the People constituencies at 371,418. No constituency for the Assembly had less than 38,900 voters.

For purposes of polling, the 79 constituencies for the Assembly were divided into 4,402 polling stations. Separate polling booths were provided for ladies in big cities like Gwalior, Indore, Ujjain, etc. and other district headquarters. In the remote adivasi tracts, the state government had made special thatched polling booths which were approachable on foot only. Pollings for the Assembly and Parliamentary elections were held simultaneously and were conducted on the same day and in the same polling booths, but in separate compartments.

## ELECTION EXPENSES

A sum of Rs. 20 lakhs was estimated to be the election expenditure to be borne on a 50 : 50 basis by the state and central governments. It has been difficult to assess the sum spent by different parties on their propaganda work, but the state Congress had decided to raise an election fund of Rs. 5 lakhs for financing election work in the state. Every contestant was expected to keep his election expenses restricted to the limits prescribed by the law, but the resourceless socialist workers in Jhabua district could hardly manage to spend on an average Rs. 250 on each constituency, and still they won. Congress naturally had to spend much more than all other parties combined.

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Of the 11 seats in the House of the People reserved for this state, 8 were general, 2 were reserved for Scheduled Castes and one was reserved for Scheduled Tribes. The two seats for the Scheduled Castes were reserved in two double-member constituencies viz., (1) Shajapur-Rajgarh and (2) Bhind-Morena. The one seat for the Scheduled Tribes was reserved in a single-member constituency, viz. Jhabua. Thus there were seven single-member and two double-member constituencies for the House of the People. Thirty-eight candidates contested the elections for the 11 seats in Parliament; the Congress put up 11 candidates, including 2 from the Scheduled Castes; the Socialists had 8 including one Scheduled Caste; the Jan Sangh, 5 including one Scheduled Caste; the R.R.P., 4 including one Scheduled Caste; the Hindu Mahasabha, 2; the K.M.P.P., 1; the Communists, 2; and 5 candidates contested the election as Independents. The Vice-President of Ram Rajya Parishad was the only lady candidate in the run who fought from two constituencies; no Muslim candidate was put up.

The Congress contested all the 11 seats and gained 9, the remaining 2 having gone to the Hindu Mahasabha—both, in fact, going in favour of the same candidate, the organising Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha. One Scheduled Tribe and two Scheduled Caste reserved seats also were captured by the Congress. The rest of the political parties and the Independents (who in all had put up 27 candidates) drew a blank. The Congress secured 900,385 votes, that is, above 46.4 % of the votes polled.

## STATE ASSEMBLY

The state Assembly consists of 99 seats. Of which 17 are reserved for the Scheduled Castes, 12 for the Scheduled Tribes and the remaining 70 are general. Reservation for the Scheduled Tribes seats was made in 9 single-member constituencies in 4 districts of the South (Nimar, Jhabua, Ratlam and Dhar) which constitute a prominently Adivasi

region having as many as 75% of the total number of Adivasi voters in the state. For the Scheduled Castes, 2 seats were reserved in each of the 3 districts, Bhind, Morena and Ujjain, while one seat each was reserved in the remaining districts, except Jhabua and Ratlam where Harijans are in a very small minority.

For 98 seats (one uncontested seat excluded), 439 candidates contested the elections. Statistically speaking, it meant approximately 4.5 candidates for one seat. The party-wise contestants for the Assembly seats were as follows : Congress 98 (including 17 Scheduled Castes and 11 Scheduled Tribes); Socialist 59; Hindu Mahasabha 33; Ram Rajya Parishad 39; Communist 18; Jan Sangh 42; K.M.P.P. 8; Bharat Bhoomi Sangh 6; Kisan Congress Samiti 5; and Independent 131.

The 98 contested seats were captured by the parties as follows : Congress 74, Hindu Mahasabha 11, Jan Sangh 4, R.R.P. 2, Socialist 4, Independent 3. One Scheduled Tribes reserved seat from Sailana constituency went to a Congress candidate uncontested, the nominations of other candidates having been rejected at the time of scrutiny.

Analysing the results thus obtained, on the basis of reserved as well as general seats, it appears that out of 12 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes, the Congress collected 6, the Socialists 4, the Hindu Mahasabha one, and the Jan Sangh one. Of the 17 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, the Congress captured 16 and the Hindu Mahasabha got only one. Of the 70 general seats, the Congress got 53; the Hindu Mahasabha 9; the Jan Sangh 3; the R.R.P. 2; Independents 3.

The Congress Party secured 45.3% of the votes, and captured 75% of the seats. Among the Congress successes were four ministers; three sitting M.P.s, including a whip of the Congress Party in Parliament; a General Secretary of P.C.C.; a Vice-President of the All-India I.N.T.U.C.

In spite of its quantitative success, the Congress lost much in quality. It had to go to the new Assembly without several of its leading lights, e.g. the Chief Minister; the Law-cum-Revenue Minister; the Speaker of the Assembly, and a Harijan Deputy Minister, all unseated by Hindu Mahasabha candidates. One of the two General Secretaries was defeated

by an R.R.P. candidate, and the Muslim Deputy Minister lost in favour of an Independent candidate; the President of the P.C.C., a sitting M.L.A., lost in the Parliamentary election to a Hindu Mahasabha candidate.

The Congress benefited most from double-member constituencies, that is from the minority vote. Out of 20 seats in the 10 double-member constituencies of the northern seven districts, the Congress lost only 3 while out of the 23 single-member constituencies in the same region, it lost 11 seats. In the southern districts, out of the 20 seats in 10 double-member constituencies the Congress lost only one seat, while out of the 36 single-member seats in these districts, it lost 9.

The Hindu Mahasabha captured 9 general seats and one each of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes seats. The Sabha set up candidates for 33 seats and in capturing one-third of these seats polled 2,36,828 votes, or 11% of the valid votes. Its candidates included 7 Zamindars and 8 Harijans. The success of the Hindu Mahasabha is noteworthy for two reasons: firstly, that while it could bag only 7 seats in the rest of the country, it captured 11 seats in Madhya Bharat alone; and secondly, its organising Secretary won 2 Parliamentary seats, defeating two important Congress leaders, an ex-Chief Minister and the President of the P.C.C., and an ex-Education Minister in Gwalior State.

The Ram Rajya Parishad contested 39 seats, but could get only 2 seats. The party polled 1,48,879 votes, or nearly 7 per cent of the total. One of its successes was against a General Secretary of the State Congress. .

The Jan Sangh entered the contest with 42 candidates but won only 4 seats, polling 193,617 votes, or a little over 9 per cent of the total votes polled.

The Socialist Party with 59 candidates, next only to Congress, had only 4 wins, and all of them from the tribal area, Jhabua district, on the Madhya Bharat—Bombay border in the south-west of this state, where their success is attributed to the excellent work of a social worker for over 15 years. Besides, this region has been a neglected one for a long time; the scarcity of drinking water coupled with general economic distress, has augmented the frustration and dissatisfaction

among the people. The Socialist Party secured 54 per cent of the total votes cast in the 4 constituencies of Jhabua. In all, the party polled nearly 1.42 lakhs of votes, or less than 7 per cent of the total valid votes.

The Communist Party contested the election with 18 candidates and secured about 40,000 votes, less than 2 per cent of the total votes polled.

The K.M.P.P. with 8, the Bharat Bhoomi Sangh with 6 and the Kisan Congress Samiti with 5 candidates respectively drew blanks, hardly securing 0.05 per cent of the votes.

One hundred and thirty one Independents, including 50 Congress rebels, contested 67 seats and won 3; over a 100 lost their deposits. A little over 12.5 per cent of the votes had been cast in favour of Independents. The success of these Independents was partly due to their personal influence and partly due to caste or communal considerations which were freely exploited by the contestants.

### SOME SIDELIGHTS

All the leading personalities among the Socialists and Communists were defeated, and so was the organising Secretary of the K.M.P.P. in Madhya Bharat. All prominent Jagirdars of the state were defeated, except one who won because of his personal influence and popularity. In the field of communal politics, the Presidents of the M.B. Mahasabha and Jan Sangh and the All-India Vice-President of the Ram Rajya Parishad were defeated. An absconder in the Gandhi murder trial also lost by a narrow margin of less than 200 votes at the hands of a Minister from a Gwalior constituency. But the counsel of an accused in the same famous case could get elected on the Mahasabha ticket from a Gwalior constituency, defeating his Congress rival by a substantial majority. In four Assembly contests, the Mahasabha lost to the Congress with a very slender margin of less than 200 votes. In Guna, a Mahasabha nominee and a sitting member, lost to the Congress candidate by only 14 votes. Similarly, in Bijapur constituency, the Congress candidate defeated the Mahasabha candidate by only 26 votes. These cases show that in

a number of constituencies in northern M.B., the Hindu Mahasabha was running very close to the Congress, and some of its defeats may be accidental. The Congress, too, wherever it lost to the Sabha, proved to be a formidable rival. In Bhilsa district where it lost three out of four seats in favour of the Sabha, the Congress sustained defeat only by 1,267 votes in all the four constituencies together. In Greater Gwalior, the Sabha had a lead of only 5,244 votes over its Congress rival.

No prince or ex-ruler from any of the states sought elections either to the Union Parliament or to the state legislature, nor is there any evidence of any political influence exerted by any of the 20 rulers of the former princely states now integrated into M.B. The non-partisan spirit displayed by them, and their strict neutrality, drew praise from all responsible party leaders.

Three government servants resigned their posts in order to contest the election. One of them, a lecturer in economics in Gwalior, who stood on a Socialist ticket, lost to a Hindu Mahasabhaite. The other was a tehsildar in Morena district who stood as an Independent candidate in his home constituency and lost to a Congress candidate, a sitting M.P. and an ex-Minister of Gwalior State. This was indeed a neck to neck race which resulted in the defeat of the Independent candidate by a majority of about 450 votes only. The third aspirant was a Sub-Inspector of Police in the southern division; he also lost in favour of a Congress candidate.

## MINORITY REPRESENTATION

There were five Muslim members in the 75 member state Assembly, dissolved before the General Elections; the population of Muslims in Madhya Bharat is estimated to be about 5 lakhs out of a total of nearly 80 lakhs. The number of Muslim contestants in the General Elections was eight; the Congress nominating five and the remaining three being Independents. Of the five Muslims put up by the Congress, only two were returned. Two other Congress Muslims lost to Jan Sangh candidates in Sendhwa and Bhaupura constitu-

encies respectively, while the third (then a Deputy Minister) was defeated by an Independent.

All Muslim organisations appealed to their co-religionists to support Congress candidates, and several prominent individuals, including a nephew of the Nawab of Bhopal, actively canvassed for them. The Nawab of Bhopal donated Rs. 50,000 to the Congress Election Fund, and placed four jeeps at the disposal of the District Congress Committee for election work. The defeat of Muslim candidates was not due to prejudice against the community as such, but because of the want of proper electioneering, and the non-popularity—in some cases—of the candidates.

From among the other minority communities, only two Parsi candidates sought election to the state Legislature: one, an Indore mill-magnate, contested as a Congress candidate; and the other, a young lawyer, was on the Communist Party ticket. The Congress candidate secured the highest number of votes (17,480 out of 25,170 votes polled) of all the single-member constituencies in the state. The Communist candidate fared badly and lost his deposit.

## WOMEN CANDIDATES

In all nine women contested the elections: three on Congress tickets; two as Socialists; one Hindu Mahasabha; and three Independents. Only two women were elected to the Assembly: one as a Socialist candidate from the Scheduled Tribes reserved seats in Jhabua district, defeating a Congress rival by over 2000 votes; the other as a Congress candidate from the general seat from Rajgarh, defeating one R.R.P. candidate and three Independents. One sitting lady-member of the legislature lost on the Congress ticket in Gwalior constituency in favour of a Hindu Mahasabha candidate, and another in Khategaon constituency to a candidate of the Hindu Mahasabha by a narrow margin of 200 votes.

Women voters in Bhil areas exhibited unusual consciousness in coming to the booths in the Jhabua constituency where a Bhil lady was contesting on a Socialist ticket. At Pitol village, in their eagerness to cast their votes, they

demanding from the polling officer a new ballot box, the first one having been full to the top with ballot papers. Their request was complied with. The Scheduled Tribes of Jhabua district, displayed a keen interest in the election.

As already stated elsewhere, the lady vice-president of the All India R.R.P., an impressive speaker and a lady of the Royal family of former Dewas State, who fought for a Parliamentary seat from two constituencies lost in both in favour of Congress candidates.

### SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

About one third of the Madhya Bharat population—nearly 26 lakhs—consists of members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The number of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes voters in the state was 6,76,088 and 5,13,402 respectively. In the 99-member legislative Assembly, Scheduled Castes are allotted 17 seats and Scheduled Tribes 12. Thus with a strength of 29 members in the state Legislature, they would undoubtedly exercise a powerful influence over the political life of the state.

There is no denying the fact that in winning 16 out of 17 Harijan seats, the Congress had benefited from its services to the backward communities. Of the 12 Scheduled Tribes candidates of the Congress, one was returned without contest, and 5 others won in the contest. Thus an Adivasi earned the distinction of being the first candidate to be declared elected to the state legislature without firing the proverbial shot.

### REGIONAL ANALYSIS

A regional analysis shows that Congress fared badly in the northern part of the state—Gwalior and its adjoining areas. Of the 37 seats contested by the Congress in this region, it lost 12 seats. Of these 12 seats, 9 have gone to the Mahasabha, 2 to the R.R.P., and the remaining one to an Independent. Eleven of the 12 seats lost by the Congress in this region were general seats.



In the southern region, the Congress contested 61 seats (one Congress candidate was returned unopposed), and lost only 12 seats, of which 2 went to the Mahasabha, 4 to the Socialist, 4 to the Jan Sangh, and 2 to Independents. Half of these 12 seats were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes which predominantly inhabit this area, and the rest were general.

In Indore city—the summer capital—the Congress annexed all four seats; while in Gwalior city—the winter capital—Congress lost two of the three seats and won only one (and that by a narrow margin of less than 200 votes).

Hindu communalism is asserting itself in the northern districts of the state where (with the support of refugees) Sabhaites have gained some ground; the southern part, though not completely immune from such influences, shows only a few communal pockets here and there. It is evident that the Congress in the north is definitely feeble, and there is no leader of stature in all Madhya Bharat who can command respect from all the people.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS

An overall review of the election indicates that the Congress is losing its hold on the people. The huge majorities that the Congress won in 1946 have become a matter of the past, and the vacuum created by the Congress has not yet been filled by any other political party. The major cause of the Congress victory is the fact that the opposing parties failed to put up a united front. Congress had the advantage of being the oldest political party in the field and having a network of its branches and workers spread all over the state. It had the unique advantage of being in power since the inception of M.B. State and as such it could initiate certain ameliorative measures for the people and thereby gain the good-will of the bulk of the electorate.

But the Congress suffered from the disadvantage of being a house divided against itself. There was so much of dissension and personal bickerings among the rank and file that the Congress failed to pull their weight for the achievement

of a common object. Sometimes these differences became so pronounced that the whole political atmosphere was vitiated. But the worst that the Congress has done is to foster the feeling of local loyalties associated with the question of location of the capital, which has hardly left any section of society unaffected. The Indore-Gwalior controversy that is being engineered for the benefit of a few has thrown into the back-ground all the main problems of our social life; and even the Prime Minister's award has not done much to ease the tension.

The selection of candidates by the State Election Board which uncorked discontent and criticism from several sections left much to be desired. Some of the persons whose presence in the state Assembly would have been inconvenient to some ambitious aspirants have been kicked upward to the House of the People. A large number of candidates were given constituencies other than their own, which was quite unwelcome to the local populace.

Last, but not the least, the inefficiency of the Congress regime, coupled with acts of omission and commission, like firing on students and neglect of refugees, proved to be a source of much discontent. Undoubtedly the elections have been an eye-opener to the Congress.

## POST ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

The decline of Congress leadership, and especially the defeat of the Chief Minister, set a number of hard nuts for the Congress to crack. Not even the most pessimistic could have expected the defeat of the Chief Minister in his own home constituency. But the verdict of the people was against him. However, in view of the Gwalior—Indore controversy which had been a very unwholesome feature of the politics of the state for the last three years, his retention as Chief Minister was considered indispensable. Hurried consultations with the Congress High Command in Delhi were held and it was decided that some one of his trusted colleagues should make room for him. In the meanwhile, the Finance Minister was chosen to act as leader of the party till the

election of the Chief Minister to the state Legislature. Subsequently, a safe place was discovered in Mandsaur City where a Hindu Mahasabha candidate, who lost his deposit in the last election was considered to be no match for the Chief Minister in the ensuing contest. But to the great surprise of all, the same Hindu Mahasabha candidate had an easy win over the Chief Minister by a majority of about 2,000 votes. This defeat, inspite of the best of Congress efforts, caused deep resentment in Congress circles and even the Congress High Command was perturbed. Indeed, an enquiry had been instituted by the Congress President in this connection. The Congress Party in its recent meeting has confirmed the appointment of the officiating Chief Minister. This has set speculations at rest, though rumours are in the air that the twice-defeated Chief Minister may seek to fight the electoral battle for the third time.

## CONCLUSION

With the exception of a few complaints of a minor nature relating to threats and intimidations given by rival candidates and their supporters, the polling throughout the state went on peacefully. Repolling had to be reported to at eleven polling stations, not because of any deliberate mischief or malpractice, but because out of sheer ignorance the illiterate voters attempted to thrust in their voting slips and the seals got damaged.

The administration can be credited with showing impartiality in the discharge of their election work. It was, indeed, a stupendous responsibility which they executed with efficiency and integrity.

# 12 MYSORE

T. S. NARAYAN RAO  
Maharaja's College, Mysore

*Area: 29,489 sq. miles*

*Population: 90,74,792*

*Electorate: 39,69,735*

		House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats	.. ..	11	99
Constituencies	.. ..	9	80
Uncontested seats	.. ..	—	1
Contesting candidates	.. ..	37	393
Valid votes polled	.. ..	28,24,427	27,53,868
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies		51.9	50.8

## INTRODUCTION

The three preliminary stages in regard to elections, viz., filing of nominations, scrutiny and withdrawals, being over, the stage was set for the election campaign in Mysore State by the end of November 1951. The state had to elect 110 candidates in all, 11 candidates to the House of the People and 99 candidates to the Legislative Assembly of the state. Polling in the state was spread over three weeks from January 2, 1952.

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLLING

Polling was simultaneous for the House of the People and the Legislative Assembly, separate compartments or booths

being provided for the two. There were 4,000 polling stations for the whole state, and about 40 lakhs of people were entitled to exercise their franchise. Owing to the magnitude of the operations and the impossibility of finding the needed personnel (amounting to nearly 40,000 persons to man and equip all the 4,000 polling stations simultaneously) it was decided to treat each Parliamentary constituency as the basic area for conducting the elections, and to conduct the polling, in one Assembly constituency in each Parliamentary constituency at a time and on one date, except in some double-member constituencies, in which cases the elections were conducted in one day with the help of an extra set of personnel.

The Assembly constituencies numbered 80 of which 19 were double-member constituencies with reserved seats for Scheduled-Castes and Tribes. The average number of polling stations in each Assembly constituency was about 43, and in double-member constituencies 86. The number, however, was not invariably the same in all the constituencies, but varied slightly from constituency to constituency. Polling stations were so located that each could cover about a thousand voters. But in the hilly and relatively inaccessible areas of the Malnad districts (north-western parts of the state) polling stations were provided even for a lesser number of voters, in certain places the total number of voters to be served being as low as 200. The distances to the polling stations from the farthest village were generally within two miles in the case of most of the polling stations, but this was not found possible in the case of Malnad where the population is very sparse.

Kadur had the lowest number of voters, viz. 34,929 and Krishnarajpet, in Mandya District had the largest number viz. 50,968. Among the double-member constituencies, Bangalore North had a voting strength of 96,085. The largest number of candidates in a single-member constituency was in Mysore City South, there being nine candidates.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

Unlike other states where the results of the elections were announced as early as possible, in Mysore State the

results of polling were announced only after the elections in all the constituencies were over, which was on the 24th January, 1952. The reasons for this were explained by the Government as follows: (a) the Armed Forces personnel who had the right to vote, taking advantage of postal voting, had been asked to exercise their franchise before January 25; (b) one Returning Officer had to look after six or seven constituencies and he could not take up the work of counting until polling was over in all these constituencies; (c) the Election Officers had to move from constituency to constituency; (d) it was also pointed out that in order to ensure free and fair elections, the results of voting in some constituencies should not be made known before voting took place in other constituencies, for unlike in highly advanced countries like the United Kingdom, there was likely to be a tendency to cast votes in favour of the 'winning horse.'

Arrangements were made to keep the ballot boxes in safe custody. They were sealed in the presence of candidates or their agents and their signatures obtained on pieces of paper and affixed to the ballot boxes. The boxes were deposited in the treasuries. Delayed counting was received with some misgivings by certain parties who argued that postponement of counting would lead to tampering with the boxes and other malpractices.

## CONTESTING PARTIES

There were six distinct parties in the field, viz., the Congress Party, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh, the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Communist Party. Of these the Congress Party alone set up candidates for all the 11 Parliamentary seats and the 99 Assembly seats. The K.M.P.P. set up 58 candidates for the Assembly, and the Socialist Party came next with 46 candidates. The Jan Sangh set up 22, and the Communists just five candidates, while the S.C.F. contested seven seats. There were altogether 393 candidates in the field contesting the 99 Assembly seats and 37 candidates contesting the 11 Parliamentary seats. Of the 393 contestants to the State As-

sembly as many as 164 stood as Independents.

The objectives outlined in the manifesto of the Congress Party are too well-known to be repeated here. Generally, stress was laid on the Five Year Plan whose objective was to bring about an improvement in national life, and in particular a rise in the standard of living of the people. The party candidates emphasized the achievements of the Congress government in the state in the fields of education, industry and rural electrification schemes. A major part of their election speeches was devoted to a criticism of other parties. It was stressed that no other party could deliver the goods to the people and that some were definitely anti-nationalist. The names of great Congress leaders were repeatedly mentioned and their services to the country recalled. The party carried on vigorous propaganda. It held regular mass meetings, distributed leaflets and in some places resorted to door-to-door canvassing. Prominent leaders of the party toured the state and appealed to the voters to support their party. The Congress was very influential. Its election propaganda was organised throughout the state.

The K.M.P. Party was the old Janata Party in a new garb. Among its objectives were: (1) the realisation of a secular state; (2) the establishment of an ideal government based on justice and efficiency; (3) the reduction of burdensome taxes; (4) the eradication of illiteracy and ill health; and (5) the upliftment of villages and improvement of the conditions of living of labourers and farmers. This party concentrated its strength in Bangalore, Tumkur, and Mysore districts. Among the members of this party were two ex-ministers of the state. While emphasizing its objectives in contesting the elections, the K.M.P. Party accused the Congress of all sorts of corruption, favouritism and utter neglect of public interest. Controls and their administration by the Congress government came in for particular attack.

The Socialist Party promised land reforms and better living conditions to the working class. It concentrated its strength in Tumkur.

The Jan Sangh emphasized the importance of national

solidarity and cultural unity. In the opinion of this party private enterprise had a place and deserved all encouragement. Only a few basic industries could be nationalised. It would abolish zamindari on payment of compensation to the zamindars. It promised to pay special attention to the improvement of Malnad areas. It would strive to ensure better and more efficient administration.

The Communists worked generally in constituencies in which the labourers were in a majority. They attacked the Congress Party on various grounds and accused it of capitalist sympathies. The Communists promised to strive for a better deal for labour and for overcoming scarcity of food. They contested five seats, two in Kolar Gold Fields (K.G.F.), two in Bangalore City and one in Davanagere City.

The S.C.F. concerned itself with the welfare and advancement of the Depressed classes.

Something must be said about the Independents. Among the candidates seeking election as Independents were some who had been members of the Congress before the date of filing of nominations. Some of them who had applied for selection as Congress nominees revolted against the organisation when they were not selected and after resigning from the Congress, they stood as Independents. Except in a very few constituencies the Independents had no influence. They made all sorts of vague promises which even the ordinary illiterate voter could realise were impossible of attainment. There was a realization on the part of the voters generally, that in the scheme of representative government based on party rule there was no place for Independents.

## WOMEN CANDIDATES

Four ladies stood for election. Three of them were Congress nominees. They were Shrimatis B. L. Subbamma (Chickmagalur-cum-Mudigere), Bellary Siddamma (Davanagere) and Lakshmi Devi Ramanna (Hosakote-Anekal). The fourth woman candidate was Janaba Hamida Habibulla. She was backed by up the S.C.F., but she sought election as an Independent.



## PROPAGANDA

The parties as well as the Independents adopted the usual media of canvassing and propaganda. Issue and distribution of leaflets, door-to-door canvassing, addressing mass meetings, advertisement on cinema screen, street processions, shouting of slogans, etc., were among the propaganda devices. Meetings in cities were generally attended by labourers and school-boys. There were hecklers too, intent upon mischief. Sometimes the meeting would end in chaos. These things were however exceptional. It must be said that the meetings were generally held in a peaceful atmosphere.

A noteworthy feature of the elections was the formation of a Voters' Association in the City of Mysore. The object of this Association was to invite the candidates belonging to the different parties to address the members thus providing the voters an opportunity to judge the merits of the candidates and the worth of the organisations they represented. Independents, too, were invited. The voters demanded free education upto the age of 14 years, the right to recall a member of the legislature and free rationing of ordinary comforts (i.e. food, clothing and shelter). Strange to say, the Voters' Association did not press for the consideration of local needs. In rural parts the personal influence of the candidate was a powerful factor.

## THE PRESS

Certain newspapers were partial to the Congress Party. They tried to evaluate the achievements of the Congress in various fields and ended their articles with an appeal for support to that party. The speeches of Congress Party members were featured prominently. All the papers published the election manifestos of the several contesting parties.

## ANALYSIS OF POLLING

### *Urban Areas*

Urban areas include the headquarters of all the nine districts into which the state is divided for purposes of

administration, and also some major towns. In many areas there was brisk and heavy polling. There were long queues of voters waiting to exercise their franchise. Women did not lag behind men voters. In Bangalore City, in some of the polling booths, votes had been polled up to 75 to 80 per cent. This was particularly so in Srirampur area where the labour population is large. On an average about 50 to 55 per cent of the voters exercised their franchise. From the long queues of women including Muslims in purdah at many booths, it may be surmised that proportionately more women exercised their voting right than men. In Kolar nearly 70 per cent of the voters voted. Trade Union leaders believe that nearly 90 per cent of the mine-workers voted. Women voters who numbered 36,839 out of a total of 77,446 voters in the K.G.F. double-member constituency were prominent in the queues. In Mysore City polling was somewhat dull at the commencement obviously due to the chill weather. But later, as the hours passed, people queued up in large numbers. On an average in both the north and the south constituencies in the city, not more than 40 per cent of the electorate went to the polls. Indifference on the part of voters was markedly visible there. It was also true to some extent that the public were not informed as to where they should go in order to cast their votes. In Tumkur, Chitaldoorg, Hassan, Shimoga, Bhadravati, Devanagere, Kadur and Chickmagalur polling was on an average scale.

### *Rural Areas*

In some taluks the polling was heavy. In Ramanagaram over 80 per cent of the total 37,502 voters exercised their franchise. Several *goshas* ladies voted. Nearly 3,500 Muslim voters turned up at the polls and cast their votes. In a village near Ramanagaram, 850 out of 1,076 people had voted. In the rural areas of Mysore District polling was not so heavy. The Yelandur constituency consisted of 86,361 voters representing 168 villages; about 50 per cent cast their votes. In one village, out of 500 women entitled to vote, hardly a dozen

had registered their votes. The reason they gave for this lapse was that custom came in their way.

It must be pointed out that polling was rather dull in rural areas generally. At one booth for two hours only five voters exercised their franchise out of a total of 1,090 voters. At another booth only 30 had voted. It is evident that the villagers have not developed much political consciousness and they need a lot of persuasion. At some booths none exercised the franchise, while at others ballot papers were placed on the box apparently not knowing that they had to be put into the box. Despite propaganda by the candidates and their agents, the villagers have not yet understood either the system or the significance of voting.

## LAW AND ORDER

In almost all the constituencies proper precautions had been taken by the authorities to maintain peace and order. The presiding officers and polling officers conducted themselves well in accordance with the election rules and regulations. True to their tradition, the members of the civil service remained neutral.

## REVIEW OF RESULTS

The Congress Party has been swept back to power. The party won 74 out of 99 seats in the Assembly. The Party candidates obtained 12,44,807 votes out of a total of over 27 lakhs of votes cast. Almost all the Ministers and prominent Congressmen have been returned. The only exceptions were Shri. Subrahmanyam, a former President of the Mysore Constituent Assembly, and Shri. H. C. Dasappa, Minister for Finance, both of whom were defeated at the hands of K.M.P.P. candidates. In the elections to the House of the People the Congress Party captured ten out of eleven seats. The final party position in the Assembly is: the Congress 74, the K.M.P.P. eight, the Socialists three, the S.C.F. two, the Communists one, and the Independents eleven. No Congress candidate forfeited his deposit.

The K.M.P.P. which went to the electorate with the second largest contingent of 58 candidates got only eight seats. Fourteen per cent of the votes were cast in this party's favour and 22 of its candidates lost their deposits. The Socialists who entered the arena with 47 candidates met with little success, only three having been returned. The Socialist members polled 8.2% of the votes and 20 of the candidates forfeited their deposits. The Jan Sangh with 23 candidates drew a blank and 16 of them failed to poll the minimum for retaining their deposits. The Communists concentrating their strength in predominantly labour areas set up only five candidates and won one seat from the K.G.F. where the Trade Union leader Shri. K. S. Vasan triumphed. The S.C.F. won two out of the 19 reserved seats. It had contested seven. The Jan Sangh, the Communists and the S.C.F. together shared just 5 per cent of the valid votes. Four S.C.F. and four Communist candidates forfeited their deposits. The Independents of whom there were 158 in the list won 11 seats and half their members lost their deposits. Twenty six per cent of the votes were polled in favour of the Independents.

# 13

## P. E. P. S. U.

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 10,078 sq. miles*  
*Population: 34,93,685*  
*Electorate: 17,63,531*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	5	60
Constituencies .. ..	4	50
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	1
Contesting candidates .. ..	31	373
Valid votes polled .. ..	14,75,112	13,54,478
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..	59.5	58.9

### INTRODUCTION

Patiala and East Punjab States Union, one of the Part 'B' States of the Indian Union, consists of eight former principalities—six Sikh, one Muslim and one Hindu. These eight principalities, Patiala, Nabha, Kapurthala, Jind, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Nalagarh and Kalsia, were integrated into one Union in July 1948, with the former ruler of Patiala State as its first Rajpramukh. Sikhs form the majority of the population, constituting about 60 per cent of the total, including about 5,00,000 Sikh refugees who came from West Pakistan and have now settled down in different parts of the Union.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the great majority of people. The state does not have any major industries within its boundaries. Its economy is still feudal. Biswadars (landlords) still dominate in most spheres of the state's eco-

nomy. The Congress Party, in its brief period in office, abolished 75 per cent of Biswadari rights.

The main problem before the state's administration is the checking of crime. In the last three years, the record of crimes committed is astonishingly high. It is reported that there has been, on an average, at least one murder every day during this period.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

Elections were new to the people of this state. No elections were held in any of the former princely states that constitute the Patiala and East Punjab States Union. As a result, there was very little political consciousness among the people. After the establishment of the Union, the first popular Ministry was formed by Shri. Gian Singh Rarewala, maternal uncle of the Rajpramukh, in January 1949. The Congress Party at that time did not join the Ministry. However, in May 1951, when the General Elections became a certainty, the Congress decided to form its own Ministry. The Congress Ministry was headed by Col. Raghubir Singh.

About 50 per cent of the total population of the Union was entitled to vote in the general elections. The voters came from 36 towns, and from 6,166 villages; women formed about 40 per cent of the total electorate. These voters were to elect a state Legislative Assembly of 60 members, and five members to the House of the People. In the state Assembly, 10 seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes, while among the five House of the People seats one was reserved for them. Out of the 60 seats, 39 were to be elected by constituencies having Sikh majorities, and 20 by constituencies having Hindu majorities. There were 54 constituencies: 50 for the state Assembly, and four for the House of the People. Of the 50 Assembly constituencies, 40 were single-member and ten double-member; while out of four Parliamentary constituencies, three were single-member and one double-member.

Since elections were entirely new to the people of the state, much was expected from mock elections held in some places for educating the voters. It was admitted, however,

that these experiments did not help the voters much.

During the scrutiny of nomination papers, a number of nominations were rejected on technical grounds. Notable among these cases were those of the former ruler of Faridkot and Shri. Roshanlal, Deputy Minister for Labour. The nomination papers of an eighty year old Communist underground candidate, Baba Harnam Singh, were rejected because he did not appear before the Presiding Officer to testify to his signature on them.

For recording the verdict of the people, 602 polling booths were provided by the election authorities. Polling was held between January 7 and 24, 1952.

## PARTIES AND THE CAMPAIGN

There were ten parties in the election field. However the major parties were only two, the Congress Party and the Akali Dal. Other parties, such as the Socialist Party, the Krishikar Lok Party and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) existed in name only. The Communist Party, the Jan Sangh, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Lal Communist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation had slightly better election organisations than the three other parties listed.

Before Independence, the Congress Party functioned through Praja Mandals in Patiala and in the other constituent states of P.E.P.S.U. The Congress took over the administration of the state in May 1951. The party has been divided into three groups: the groups are led by Col. Raghubir Singh, Shri. Brishbhan and Shri Giani Zail Singh. In the Municipal elections held in Patiala early in 1951, Col. Raghubir Singh, who later on became the Chief Minister, was defeated. In the local bodies' elections held at that time, the Congress Party lost fifty-six out of sixty seats it contested. Even the General Secretary of the state Congress was defeated by an Independent candidate. On the eve of the elections, the party somehow managed to patch up the differences between the three rival groups. But the patch-up was temporary.

The Congress Party's record in office is not outstanding. However, it did one thing which helped the party to some

extent in the elections: it abolished 75 per cent of Biswadari. Nearly 70,000 tenant families benefited from the abolition of Biswadari, a majority of whom are Sikhs. The Congress Party, therefore, hoped to get a large number of Sikh votes in the elections. In the Hindi speaking areas, tehsil Narwana and districts Mahendragarh and Kohistan, the Congress was strong. In other parts its support mainly came from urban and not from rural areas. In urban areas the party is supported primarily by the business community.

The Congress Party contested eight out of ten seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the state Assembly in alliance with the Depressed Classes League. It also contested the one seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the House of the People.

Opposition to feudalism and a promise of social and economic regeneration were the main items of the Congress' election programme. Shri. A. P. Jain, Central Minister for Rehabilitation, toured the state and addressed a number of meetings in which he cited the achievements of the Congress Party and asked the people to vote for its candidates. The Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, visited the state on January 5, 1952. He addressed a largely attended public meeting in Patiala. Some discontented elements attempted unsuccessfully to disturb his meeting. Shri. Nehru opposed the demand of a separate Punjabi-speaking state made by the Akali Party. It is believed that the chances of the Congress Party at the polls were somewhat improved as a result of Shri. Nehru's visit to the state. The spokesmen of the party were hopeful of getting a working majority in the state Assembly.

The Akali Party had concentrated all its strength in this state. P.E.P.S.U. is a Sikh majority state and the Akalis thought that with some effort they could muster enough strength to get a majority in the state Assembly and form the Ministry. Master Tara Singh, leader of the party, spent a lot of time in P.E.P.S.U. before and at the time of polling in this state. The main demand of the Akali Party is the creation of a separate Punjabi-speaking province. The Akalis blamed the Congress Party for partition of the country and



the consequent loss of sacred Sikh shrines. This had a great sentimental appeal to the Sikh population. In rural areas the Akali slogan was: "A vote for Akalis is a vote for the Panth."

There was some sort of electoral arrangement between the big landlords and princes who were contesting the elections, on the one hand and the Akali Party on the other. The Akali Party did not set up its own candidates against these landlords, and in some cases it withdrew such candidates where they had been set up earlier.

The Nawab of Malerkotla, the only ex-ruler and the only Muslim contesting the election as an Independent, was not opposed by the Akali Party. It is said that during Aurangzeb's rule, nearly 300 years ago, a forefather of the present Nawab protested in writing to the Mughul emperor against the proposed execution by the then Viceroy of Sirhind of the two young sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the religious leader of the Sikh community. Though the protest made by the Nawab's forefather proved fruitless, the story goes that Guru Gobind Singh pledged his community's support to the ruling dynasty of Malerkotla. That pledge is still maintained. (*Statesman*—Delhi, December 14, 1951.)

The Akali Party's President, Sardar Hukum Singh, contested a seat for the House of the People from Kapurthala Parliamentary constituency. He toured the whole state and asked the Sikh community to vote for his party. Sikh students from the Punjab, belonging to the Akali Party, went to P.E.P.S.U. to aid the election campaign of the Party.

The Jan Sangh was organised by the members of the R.S.S. in P.E.P.S.U. sometime before the general elections. It did not have much following in the state. The Sangh opposed the demand for a Punjabi-speaking province. By opposing this demand it lost the support of the Sikh community. But it hoped to get Hindu votes since most of the Hindus were also opposed to the creation of a Punjabi-speaking province. The party's activities were more or less confined to urban areas. Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, President of the Jan Sangh, came to the state and addressed a few meetings. He blamed the Congress Party for partition of the

country and demanded a more tough policy towards Pakistan.

The Communist Party has some pockets in three districts of this state. Communists organised the P.E.P.S.U. Kisan Sabha, and through it they worked among tenant farmers where they have secured a good following. At the time of the elections, most of the leading Communists were underground. They, along with the Lal Communists, had fomented trouble in some of the villages. The Communist Party took the lead in forming a Peoples Democratic Front consisting of the Lal Communist Party, the Forward Bloc (Marxist), the Left Socialists and the Communists Party itself, along with some leftist Independents. The Front advocated abolition of Biswadari without compensation, stoppage of privy purses and pensions to Jagirdars and Princes, and confiscation of capital and land.

Seth Ram Nath, former Congress Minister, formed the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in this state a few months before the elections. The party did not have the organisation required for contesting the general elections, but the K.M.P.P. leader claimed that all that was good in the Congress was now represented by the K.M.P.P. The party backed some rich candidates, and itself contested fifteen seats to the state Assembly and two to the House of the People.

The Scheduled Castes Federation, the Socialist Party, the Krishikar Lok Party and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) did not have any organisation in this state. Their election campaign was tame and ineffective.

Many Independents were in the election arena: 180 of them contested for the state Assembly and 14 for the House of the People. Among the prominent Independent candidates were the brother and two uncles of the Rajpramukh of the Union, and the Nawab of Malerkotla. Six big landlords, in addition, contested the elections as Independents.

## POLLING AND ELECTION RESULTS

Polling started on January 7, 1952, and concluded on the 24th of the same month. It was conducted peacefully. No incident was reported. Repolling was ordered in ten polling

booths of Sangrur and Mairkotla Parliamentary constituencies.

Only one candidate, an Independent, was elected unopposed to the state Assembly for one of the ten seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Nomination papers of other candidates were rejected on technical grounds. On an average there were six candidates in each constituency. In one Assembly constituency there were as many as twenty-four. The largest number of seats was contested by the Independents—180 candidates for 57 Assembly seats. Congressmen charged that the Rajpramukh favoured the feudal elements contesting the election either as Independents or as candidates of the Akali Party.

The elections did not give an absolute majority either in votes or in seats to any party. The Congress Party emerged as the largest single party in the state legislature with 26 seats and 29.22% of votes. The party needed five more seats in order to have a working majority in the Assembly of 60 members. One of its top leaders and a former Minister for Agriculture and Public Works, Giani Zail Singh, was defeated by his Independent rival, the brother of the Maharaja of Faridkot. Shri. Brishbhan, Deputy Chief Minister, secured a notable victory when he defeated the vice-president of the Akali Party in a straight fight in a Sikh majority constituency.

In the Parliamentary elections the Congress Party won two out of five seats.

The Akali Party came next to the Congress as the second largest party in the Union and the main opposition in the state Assembly. However its dream of getting a majority in the legislature was not fulfilled. The party won 19 out of 41 seats contested and polled 23.45% of votes.

Out of the five Parliamentary seats, the Akali Party won two, including the one reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Its President, Sardar Hukum Singh, defeated his Congress rival, Sardar Shardul Singh Caveeshwar in Kapurthala Parliamentary constituency.

The only ruler elected to the state Assembly was the

*Nawab of Malerkotla, who contested as an Independent. While not opposed by the Akali Party, he was opposed both by the Congress and the Jan Sangh.*

Out of 180 Independents, eight were elected to the state Assembly. One hundred and forty-four of them lost their security deposits. Fourteen Independents contested four seats in the House of the People. Only one of them was successful. Twelve lost their deposits.

Among other parties, the Jan Sangh and the Communist Party secured two seats each in the Assembly, while the K.M.P.P., the Lal Communist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation won only one seat each. Seth Ram Nath, former Minister and leader of the K.M.P.P., along with 13 out of 15 K.M.P.P. candidates, forfeited his security deposit. He was defeated by his Congress rival. The K.M.P.P. had also set up two candidates for two seats in the House of the People. Both of them lost their deposits. The Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc (Marxist) and the Krishikar Lok Party failed to win even a single seat. Most of the candidates set up by these parties forfeited their security deposits. There were seven women candidates for the election to the state Assembly. None of them was elected.

The voters' choice in the P.E.P.S.U. elections was not determined by party programmes. Few voters seemed to understand, or cared to understand, the issues involved. Their choice was determined by other factors, most important among them being the social status of a candidate and the means at his disposal.

The Independents, most of them Biswadars, and the Akalis gave a very tough fight. In a number of constituencies the margin of votes between the winner and the loser was very narrow. In Sunam constituency, a Communist candidate won against his Akali rival by a margin of 115 votes. A division of anti-Communist votes also helped the victorious Communist candidate. In Julna the victorious K.M.P.P. candidate polled only 25 per cent of the total votes polled in the constituency, and won by a margin of just 61 votes.

**ILLEGAL PRACTICES**

1. Two vehicles carrying voters were captured by the police.
2. One person was arrested for displaying a particular election symbol within the polling area.
3. In Sangrur district seals of the ballot boxes of a Communist and an Independent candidate were found to be broken in the polling booth in the rural area of Pattiwal. Repolling was held later.
4. Two ballot boxes had been tampered with at Bhattiwal.

# 14 RAJASTHAN

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*Area: 1,30,207 sq. miles*

*Population: 1,52,90,797*

*Electorate: 76,76,419*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	20	160
Constituencies .. ..	18	140
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	7
Contesting candidates .. ..	74	616
Valid votes polled .. ..	35,26,957	32,61,442
polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..		
contested constituencies .. ..	38.4	35.9

The Union of Rajasthan was created in its present form on the 15th of May, 1949 when eighteen former princely states joined together to constitute one of the largest states in the Indian Union. Prior to this final merger several smaller groupings had been effected; but direction from the Centre eventually brought about the union of this vast area. The Maharaja of Jaipur was appointed Rajpramukh. Part of the hilly state of Sirohi was added to the Union in 1950, but the Abu Road area of Sirohi was merged with Bombay State. Its return to Rajasthan remains an emotionally charged issue in state politics, as does the existence of the Part 'C' State of Ajmer in the very heart of Rajasthan territory.

## THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

The effort of integrating the divergent parts of this large-

state is one of the most difficult tasks facing the Rajasthan government. There is little feeling of unity throughout the state. Indeed many of the states are historic enemies. Communications between the various areas are undeveloped and it is difficult to get from one place to the other. The railroads that do exist are circuitous in route; motorable roads lead only to the largest cities. Telephone and telegraph services are erratic and un dependable. During the election the State Election Committee was forced to rely on the wireless and airplanes in order to effectively supervise the polling. Even so, in the Jaisalmer district, the polling party trekked across the desert on camel back.

Nor is the state geographically a single unit. Running diagonally across the state from south-west to north-east is the Aravali mountain range. North and west of this range the land is generally sandy and dry, though it improves somewhat from west to east. In the far west where Rajasthan borders Pakistan for about eight hundred miles, the desert is sparsely covered with a coarse grass which will support herds of horned cattle, sheep and camels. East of the Aravalis the land is more productive though there are still miles of barren waste in the Jaipur area. The hilly areas in the south-west provide timber for the rest of the state.

## REMNANTS OF A FEUDAL ORDER

By far the greatest majority of the people are occupied in agriculture, but due to the poor condition of the soil, Rajasthan is not able to feed itself at the present time. The density of population in the state is only 103 persons per square mile, or less than half that of the all-India average. Yet these people tend to cluster together leaving wide expanses unsettled. Hence only 20.25 million acres out of a total of 82 million acres are cultivated, much more of which could sustain crops. With the spread of irrigation, more land will undoubtedly be tilled, but at the present time only three million acres have this advantage. Consequently, the average peasant suffers greatly from the periodic droughts. Even in bountiful years the peasant lives little above subsistence level

for a large percentage of his crop is drained off by his jagirdar.

Over 70 per cent of the land in Rajasthan is under the tenure of about 9,000 jagirdaris of varying size. The predominance of this feudal system throughout the Rajput states has kept this area among the most backward in all of India. Most jagirs were granted years ago by the state chief to persons who served him or were related to him. The rights and duties attached to these jagirs varied. Some jagirdars had full judicial rights in their virtual principalities. Others were mere rent collectors who had to give soldiers or other services to the ruler. These rents, whether in cash or kind, were usually exorbitant. Nonetheless, a sort of paternal relationship often grew up between the jagirdar and his tenants for the jagirdar might renounce his revenue during a bad year, or grant wedding money, or fight the bands of dacoits that troubled the villages. This paternalistic attitude gave them great prestige among their peasants and allowed them to exercise undue influence during the elections.

In pre-Independence Rajasthan, education was limited to the men drawn from the ruling classes. For some years only the princely families had emphasized education, so in 1900 the jagirdars formed an association primarily to aid in the education of their sons. While in theory any jagirdar was a member by birth, in practice only the larger jagirdars became members. Thus the literacy level in the state at the time of integration was only 5 per cent. Men and women of the lower classes had no opportunity at all to become educated; most of them remained ignorant, superstitious, and fanatically religious. The wives of the jagirdars were perhaps the most restricted, for the Hindus of the area had adopted the Muslim system of purdah.

Even the literate 5 per cent of the population had had almost no contact with any sort of democratic institutions. At the time of union the three states of Jaipur, Bharatpur and Bikaner had legislative assemblies. Jodhpur had elected an Assembly; it was dispersed after the first meeting. Bikaner had had the first, though the weakest, of these assemblies. Established in 1913 with the help of an I.C.S. officer



who had been loaned to the state, it seldom met for more than five or six days a year. The members were either nominated or elected by municipal committees which were themselves elected on a narrow franchise.

The Maharaja of Jaipur set up a bicameral legislature for his state in 1944. Suffrage was limited on grounds of education, landholdings, or service in the army, with the qualifications for women being lower than those for men! It was estimated that this would give 5 per cent of the population of Jaipur the right to vote for the Council, and 7½ per cent for the Assembly. However, the Administrative Report of the state for 1946-47 indicates that only one person in 24 actually voted for the Council, or 125,000 persons in a population of over three millions. Nine seats in the Council were reserved for jagirdars, while women, trades and industry, and labour, were given one separately-elected seat each.

Nor were co-operatives or panchayats widespread throughout the area, though their incidence differed in the various states. In 1946 there were 618 panchayats and 725 co-operatives in the fairly small state of Bharatpur (1,972 square miles). On the other hand Jaipur, with the largest population—though not area—of any of the integrated states, had only 194 co-operative societies and 132 panchayats functioning in the same year.

Administrative systems were equally undeveloped. Some states had borrowed I.C.S. officers to help them set up an administration on British lines. Even so, the members of the administration were frequently appointed on family background rather than on merit. Regardless of this well known fact, it was necessary to integrate all members of the state civil services into the Rajasthan Civil Service. The result was an overstaffed, inexperienced and often unqualified service which still draws upon out-of-state men to run it.

One problem that Rajasthan does not appear to have is the tensions of communal enmity. Strangely enough in this backward and highly religious area, militant communalism is absent. Even during the communal riots of 1947-48 the minority Muslim community suffered from serious rioting only in the Alwar and Bharatpur districts. Perhaps the

desert area along the Pakistan border cushioned the state from the anti-Muslim sentiments; perhaps the resigned docility of the peasants precluded any militant action. Thus while the advocates of Hindu orthodoxy were given strong support during the elections, those persons preaching more strident communalism were generally less successful.

### ALMOST A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Although Praja Mandals had existed in some states for as long as twenty years, political parties as such were almost non-existent in most of Rajasthan at the time of Independence, for in a majority of the states they had been prohibited. The victorious Congress then began to organise the states under the All-India States People's Conference. Since the infant Congress organisation was the only focal point for any opposition to the status quo, opportunists as well as idealists joined it in numbers.

Once the State of Rajasthan was formally organised, the States Ministry set up a Ministry for Rajasthan which had in fact been suggested by the party-elected Provincial Congress Committee. This state-wide Congress Committee acted as an advisory body for the Congress ministries of the state until the General Elections.

The Congress Party began its term of unfettered governing with high hopes and abundant promises. But the conglomerate nature of the party soon became evident, and the struggle for power began. Eventually the first Chief Minister, Shri. Hiralal Shastri, was ousted in favour of Shri. Jaya Narayan Vyas amid charges and counter-charges of corruption and inefficiency. Inefficiency was certainly there. Few of the party members had had either political or administrative experience. The civil service was of no great help being largely as ill-trained as the politicians. Thus even well-intentioned policies backfired; the procurement of food grains in surplus areas prevented those peasants from making their usual cache of grains. When grains were needed in those areas in the following year, the administrative machinery broke down and grains were not available.

Perhaps the most important promise which Congress had given to the people in the early days was the abolition of jagirdari. A few days before polling began the Ministry did pass a hurried bill which would abolish all jagirs valued at more than Rs. 5,000. The bill lay on the desk of the Union President until after the elections; then he signed it.

This question became the major issue of the elections. and almost all campaigning and voting were geared around the problem of jagirdari. The Congress supporters hailed the bill as a step towards the promised democracy. The jagirdars and their sympathizers did not openly oppose the concept of abolition, but rather maintained that a party ministry was not competent to enact such an important piece of legislation. Further, they emphasized the fact that less than half the jagirs had been properly surveyed; this must be done before there could be any abolition of jagirdari, they insisted. Thus the election fight became polarized into two groups, Congress and the jagirdars. Other groups did not count.

The jagirdars had no political organisation as such, but the old Kshatriya Mahasabha (Jagirdar Association) sponsored candidates who agreed with their position against the abolition of jagirdari. The organisation claimed to have endorsed 140 candidates for the Assembly, all the candidates of the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Ram Rajya Parishad plus quite a few Independents. The *Hindustan Times* correspondent reported that 79 of the candidates were actually jagirdars.

Once the elections were over the successful candidates of this jagirdar group in the Assembly formed themselves into the Sanyukta Dal under the leadership of Kunwar Jaswantsingh. Had this group been united before the elections it might well have obtained a majority of seats. Why this was not done is difficult to ascertain. Very likely, however, the jagirdars feared that the Preventative Detention Act would be invoked against their leaders if their opposition was too pronounced. Or possibly they underestimated their own chances of success at the polls and did not wish to court too open a defeat.

Of all the parties associated with the jagirdars, Swami

Karpatriji's Ram Rajya Parishad set up and elected the largest number of candidates. Campaigning against the Hindu Code Bill and cow-slaughter, they played upon the deeply-imbedded religious predilections of the peasantry with amazing success. They railed against the Congress Government for allegedly killing "rats, monkeys, peacocks and *neel gais* to further the grow-more-food campaign." (*The Statesman*, Dec. 31, 1951.) Further, the Ram Rajya Parishad appealed to orthodoxy whether Hindu or Muslim; to emphasize this fact they set up a Muslim candidate in Jaipur. He was not successful, however. The following of the Ram Rajya Parishad was stronger in the rural areas, while the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jan Sangh supporters were generally urban.

On the Congress side of this central issue of jagirdari, but by no means with the Congress, were the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Krishikar Lok Party, the Communist Party, the Forward Bloc (Marxist), the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, the Socialists, and one local party called the Kisan Janata Sanyukt Party. None of these parties played an important role in the elections. The Krishikar Lok Party did have some measure of success in one area, however. The fact that these parties which were ranged on the left of Congress had little following does not mean that the Rajasthan Congress Party was itself left-wing. Indeed it was attacked for being conservative or even reactionary. Still, to the mass of newly enfranchised voters, the Congress probably did seem a revolutionary body. Besides, on the one issue that the electorate did understand the Congress and the left agreed. Thus the elections in Rajasthan were practically run on a two-party system.

But this near-existence of a two-party system must not be over-emphasized; the Congress itself had been subject to splintering tendencies. When Shri. Shastri was forced to resign from the Chief Ministership, he also left the party to form a group known as the Janata Party. Presumably he felt that his bargaining position would be better with an independent party backing him. Eventually he made an alliance with the Kisan Sabha; the party then became the Kisan Janata Sanyukt Party. The K.M.P.P. was about to

join this alliance when Shri. Shastri began accepting advances from the worried Congress Party. Nine of his party members were offered the Congress ticket and jumped back into line. Two other members had the temerity to turn down the Congress offer; altogether six candidates contested the election under the party name, but all lost their deposits.

Another incident which shows lack of Congress control over its own organisation is the case of Shri. Kumbha Ram. He was originally nominated by the State Congress Election Board to stand for two Assembly Constituencies in Bikaner. When Shri. Nehru visited the state on his election tour early in December, he conferred with local Congressmen and decided that Shri. Ram was indeed guilty of communalism. When Shri. Ram was asked to withdraw from the race, he agreed. But the date for official withdrawal of nominations had passed; his ballot boxes therefore had to be put in the polling booths. He was elected. A valid explanation of this phenomenon was given by the correspondent of the *Times* who wrote: "To a people who are born to clans, and die in clans and where kinship is yet the strongest of all bonds, the term communalism has no opprobrium attached to it."

## RAJASTHAN'S FIRST ELECTIONS

Most campaigning centered around the Congress-jagirdar contest. Though some speakers did try to introduce wider policies to their audiences, it was generally conceded that this was not successful. Shri. Nehru lashed out at the princes who were standing for election, calling them representatives of an order that was dead. In his Jodhpur meeting he had particularly bitter words to say about the late Maharaja of the State who was standing for both the Assembly and the House of the People. Shri. Vyas was contesting the Assembly seat against him, and lost.

Actually the princes were generally successful, and provided the hardest fought contest in the state. Raja Giriraj Singh, younger brother of the Maharaja of Bharatpur, stood from the Bharatpur-cum-Sawai Madhopur Parliamentary constituency against Shri. Raj Bahadur, then Deputy Minister

*in the Central Ministry of Communications. Maharaja Ajit Singh, uncle of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, contested the Parliamentary seat for Sirohi-cum-Pali; the Maharaja of Bikaner stood in his home constituency. The princes contending for Assembly seats included: Shri. Himmat Singh, another uncle of the Maharaja of Jodhpur; the Maharaja of Dungarpur and the Maharaj Kumar of Karouli. The Raja of Khetri, who opposed the Congress in his home constituency, withdrew at the last minute without reason.*

An interesting sidelight on the nomination of princely or jagirdar candidates came from Bundi. The Returning Officer rejected the nomination papers of the jagirdars on the plea that they held offices of profit under the rules of the former Bundi State, rules which had not yet been repealed. The appeal of the jagirdars to the High Court was not entertained since the Representation of the People Act had stated that only Election Tribunals were competent to deal with such problems.

When election days came, about 39 per cent of the electorate went to the polls all over the state. The number varied greatly from place to place with Bharatpur district polling the highest percentage vote of 71.9. Considering the backwardness of the state, the number is encouraging. Even more impressive than the vote, however, was the lack of disturbances. The administration, and everyone else, had been expecting trouble. The problems involved in conducting an election over such a vast area were tremendous; add to that the tension created by the proposed abolition of jagirdari as well as the increased dacoity since integration—no wonder the administration was worried. To meet all eventualities, Rajasthan set up a special high-powered election committee under the able direction of Shri. P. N. Shinyal. Its efficient functioning was possibly the most important reason why Rajasthan's elections were not the fiasco that many people predicted they would be.

The Election Control Rooms which were housed in the State Guest House in Jaipur deserve some comment. Here the committee charted the movement of all polling parties and police detachments with military precision. Altogether

there were 8,602 polling booths at 6,808 polling stations. They were manned by 1,021 polling parties consisting of at least five persons each. Voting in Rajasthan started on the 4th of January and continued on alternate days until the 24th. This allowed parties to shift from place to place within a given area conducting elections every other day. Coloured pins on a map of the state showed at a glance where every polling party was that day. Lines connecting polling stations indicated the route of each party throughout the elections.

At suspected trouble spots extra police were assigned to the polling booths. Detachments of the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary were spotted at strategic places all over the state. Their position was indicated on another map as were all the state vehicles from police lorries to ambulances. A chart indicated the number of ballot boxes distributed at certain centres over the state.

The district collectors in each area acted as supervisors of the election. The committee was in constant touch with them. At the end of each day's polling, a full report of the elections in each area was expected as soon as the boxes were brought in from the polling booths and safely locked up. These reports came in by phone, wireless and telegraph. Any disturbances were charted on another map; any indication of trouble was quickly investigated by a senior officer. The difficulties and crimes listed on this chart included: ballot box tampered with; canvassing too close to polling booths; polling party injured in motor accident and polling postponed; dacoits attacked polling party and driver killed but polling held; ballot boxes did not arrive.

This efficiency of the election committee contrasted with the earlier errors made when preparing the electoral rolls. Most of the women had been enrolled as the "wife of" so and so. Later it was decided that this was not an adequate listing; the woman's name had to appear in full. An effort was made to correct the roll, but at the time of elections some 40 per cent of the women of Rajasthan were not allowed to vote due to this improper listing. It is true, however, that some women refused to give their own names, or their husband's name when asked, to correct the roll.

For the women who were properly registered, special purdah booths were set up. In several instances, where polling booths had to be joint, they were unable to vote. Nonetheless, more women voted than had been anticipated; they made up 48 per cent of the total vote. It is significant that the women's vote was heaviest in constituencies where ex-rulers were standing.

## RESULTS

As the election results were declared, Congress and the jagirdars vied for top honours; the only contest was between these two (although eleven parties were listed as contending) for the 160 Assembly seats and 20 seats for the House of the People. Altogether there were 616 candidates for the Assembly, the largest block being the 228 Independents. There were 17 Muslims included in this total, six under the Congress symbol, two as Communists, nine as Independents. Only four women were given nomination for the Assembly and one Jan Sangh nomination went to a woman for the House of the People. The Congress did not see fit to nominate even one woman although they subsequently elected Shrimati Sharda Bhargava to the Council of States.

In the Assembly, the Congress managed a bare majority of 82, but received only 39.55% of the votes cast. Shri. Vyas was defeated in both constituencies from which he stood while his successor as Chief Minister, Shri. Tikaram Paliwal, was elected from two constituencies. The President of the Rajasthan Congress Committee, Shri. Manikaya Lal Varma, was also defeated as were two state ministers. In the Jodhpur Division, the Congress lost all but four seats to Maharaja-supported candidates.

The jagirdars won a moral victory over the Congress. Most of the 35 Independents, all the Ram Rajya Parishad's 24; the Hindu Mahasabha's two, the Jan Sangh's eight, had received jagirdar support. These men, along with the seven successful Krishikar Lok candidates and the one Socialist, one K.M.P.P. member formed the opposition group, the San-yukta Dal, in the Assembly.



Two hundred and eighty three of the Assembly candidates lost deposits; this number includes the one Scheduled Castes Federation candidate for the Assembly. The Congress won all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes seats reserved for the Assembly. The fact that the S.C.F. was unable to win any seats was due to the importance of the Depressed Classes League which identified itself with the Congress. It is interesting, however, that one of the two seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes for Parliament was won by the Krishikar Lok Party.

The rightist groups did well in the House of the People elections. Three candidates of the Ram Rajya Parishad and one of the Jan Sangh were successful; three of the Independents, who totalled six, are princes. The other nine members of the House from Rajasthan are Congressmen.

## CONCLUSION

The election contest in Rajasthan, then, was between the rightist Congress and an extremist coalition of fanatic religious leaders, princes and jagirdars. The outcome was statistically a draw, but with most of the top-ranking Congress leaders defeated, the moral victory was indeed that of the princes. With better organization, these elements might well have won the election. Now they have begun to organize. In a recent bye-election in Kishangarh (August 26, 1952) where Shri. Vyas stood for a third time for the Assembly—this time successfully—the right-wing forces united behind Shri. Amardan, a Sanyukta Dal candidate. If this united front continues, the position of a rightist Congress will become precarious. Political alliances are likely to change rapidly in the next five years. In this election, the left-wing parties were completely routed; but they cannot be ignored. As their organization grows, they may well attract Congressmen who are disgusted with party corruption or distressed at the slow progress of social and economic reform in the state.

The election machinery in this largest state worked with amazing efficiency; the peaceful polling excited admiration from all of India. Rajasthan has proved that elections can

be held in any undeveloped, backward area—provided there is competent administrative leadership. But whether the average voter understood the process is another question. Undoubtedly caste, tradition, religious beliefs, even threats and bribes, influenced the voter even more than they did in other states. On the other hand, the primary election issue in Rajasthan was one which the average voter could, and did, understand. Therefore, the voter was perhaps more able to appreciate the fact that voting involves a choice of leadership.

# 15

## SAURASHTRA

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 21,451 sq. miles*  
*Population: 41,37,359*  
*Electorate: 18,38,880*

		House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats	.. ..	6	60
Constituencies	.. ..	6	55
Uncontested seats	.. ..	1	3
Contesting candidates	.. ..	19	222
Valid votes polled	.. ..	7,62,705	9,51,509
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies	.. ..	50	47.8

Saurashtra, as its name suggests, is a state comprising some 202 small and large states previously ruled by princes. Early in 1948 all these states were integrated into the United States of Saurashtra, the merger being effected under the guidance of the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Saurashtra has been classified as a Part 'B' State in the Constitution of India. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar was appointed its first Rajpramukh by the President of the Republic.

Saurashtra, like most other princely states, was politically and otherwise an undeveloped area. Its people are poor but sturdy; educational facilities are limited to the big towns; transport facilities and means of communication are still poor.

One of the main problems of Saurashtra is the menace of dacoits and other lawless elements. It has been discovered recently that these elements have been supported by some of

the ex-princes. The state government is taking stern action to restore law and order in the state.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

Out of the total population of 41,37,359, more than 43 per cent were entitled to vote in the elections. About 47 per cent of the total electorate were women. Saurashtra electors were to elect a Legislative Assembly of 60 members and six members to the House of the People.

The state was divided into 55 Assembly and six House of the People constituencies. Of the 55 Assembly constituencies, 50 were single-member and five double-member, while all the six Parliamentary constituencies were single-member. In the state Assembly four seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes and one for the Scheduled Tribes. Polling in Saurashtra began on January 15 and concluded on January 24, 1952. Polling was peaceful. The arrangements made by the election authorities and the State Government for conducting the elections were adequate and the electorate voted freely.

Unlike neighbouring Rajasthan, Saurashtra's princes did not take to politics.

Lawlessness during the elections was expected and the Government was prepared to meet any situation. But no such incident was recorded during the period of polling.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The Congress Party, as in most parts of India, is the best organised party in the state. It has its branches in almost all villages of Saurashtra. The Congress Party started its work in Saurashtra, in the early nineteen twenties. Saurashtra being the region of Mahatma Gandhi's birth-place, the Congress received popular support and leadership and thus was able to create strong party pockets in the area in spite of the repression of political movements by the princes. Though the Congress was strong in Saurashtra, no separate Congress Committee operated there. Congressmen of Sau-

ashtra worked under the Gujarat Congress Committee.

The Congress Party's administrative record is better in Saurashtra than in many other areas. It has created a modern administration from scratch. Also there has been less power-politics within the party itself. However, the party has not been able to combat the lawlessness of dacoits who have been harassing the people of the state. The Congress has gained some unpopularity on account of this failure to maintain public order. There was a minor rift in the Congress Party when one of its leaders, the former Revenue Minister, Shri. Samaldas Gandhi, left the Congress Party in 1950. He later on joined the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party.

The K.M.P.P. in Saurashtra came into existence, as it did elsewhere in the country, a few months before the General Elections. It found a popular leader and a powerful speaker in an ex-Congress Minister and leader of *Arzi Hukumat* of Junagarh, Shri. Samaldas Gandhi. The party had no organisation worth the name in this state.

The Socialist Party was formed in 1948. Its influence is confined to the urban areas of the state. In the district of Mahuwa it has considerable influence. The Mahuwa town municipal committee is controlled by the Socialists and they have done effective work there. The Socialists hoped to win at least one seat in the Assembly from Mahuwa.

The Khedut Sangh (Peasants League) was the real rival of the Congress Party in Saurashtra. It had a paying membership of 42,000 among the farmers of the state, but did not have a popular leader or an effective spokesman. But the alliance between the K.M.P.P. and the Khedut Sangh solved this problem of leadership. The one needed an organisation and the other a leader. Khedut Sangh had a relatively good organisation.

The Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajya Parishad had little popular support. The Mahasabha's support was confined to Jamnagar and its vicinity in the district of Hilar. The Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajya Parishad existed only in name. The Communist Party of India, also, was more or less non-existent in this state. The C.P.I. did have some support among the working people of Porbandar but this was

of no particular advantage as far as the elections were concerned. The Scheduled Castes Federation and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) had little or no strength.

Most of the Independent candidates were Girasdars and were supported by the Girasdar Association. Girasdars in Saurashtra do not command the respect or popularity of their Jagirdar counterparts in neighbouring Rajasthan. Prominent among the Independents was the Thakursaheb of Dhrol.

### ELECTION ISSUES

The main election issue was the curbing of lawlessness. In the past three years the famous dacoit, Bhupat and his gang had taken a toll of 78 lives and committed dacoities yielding more than Rs. 25 lakhs. The failure of the Congress Government to capture Bhupat and his gang was made an election issue by the opposition parties.

### ELECTION ALLIANCES

1. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party and the Khedut Sangh entered into an election alliance under the leadership of Shri. Samaldas Gandhi.

2. The Congress Party and the Girasdar Association had all but entered into an election alliance. The talks broke down over the Girasdars' demand that if the Congress Party was returned to office they should get representation in the Ministry. The Congress Party refused to give any such assurance.

### ELECTIONEERING

Shri. Nehru visited the state on January 8, 1952. He toured the major constituencies and asked the people to vote for the Congress Party. He touched the issue of law and order and promised speedy action; he also discussed larger national and international issues. The names of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were the greatest assets of the Congress Party. It had ample resources and widespread orga-

nisation in the state. Congress Ministers toured their constituencies. They claimed that Saurashtra spent over 50 per cent of its Rs. 8 crore budget on nation-building activities, and that they had created a modern administration from nothing within three years. The government claimed to have taken steps to abolish landlordism in the state. The Ministers also recited the fact that the Congress Party had served the people for 60 years and had achieved Independence.

The Congress Party issued posters and handbills. A poster with Shri. Nehru's portrait was prominently displayed in all constituencies. In many villages people agreed to vote for the Congress Party because they were at least approached by that party, while no other party even reached them. The Congress Party however lost some goodwill of the peasants of the three districts of Gohilwad, Sorath and Madhya Saurashtra on account of the government's suggestion that the peasants pay two times the assessment on their land as compensation for abolition of landlordism instead of one and a half times as was agreed to before. It also decided to reduce the number of public meetings for election propaganda because some of these meetings were disturbed by Congress' opponents. Instead they employed more effective means of getting votes, such as group meetings, door-to-door canvassing and the individual approach.

The K.M.P. Party's leader, Shri. Samaldas Gandhi, addressed large gatherings. He was very critical of the Congress Government of which he was in the beginning a member. He asked the people to "elect a one-eyed cat or a black she-dog, but do not elect a Congressman." When interviewed by the special correspondent of the *Hindustan Times* about the programme of his party, Shri. Gandhi replied that, to begin with, it would be enough if nepotism and favouritism were ended, gates of opportunity opened to all in the field of bus route contracts and other spheres, and the administration cleaned of corruption which was widespread. The K.M.P.P. leaders also alleged that the Congress Party was planning to merge Saurashtra with Maha-Gujarat when it was formed. They wanted an assurance from the ruling party that the State of Saurashtra would in no case

be liquidated.

Public meetings, processions, posters and leaflets were the means employed by the K.M.P.P. for election propaganda.

The Khedut Sangh (which had an alliance with the K.M.P.P.) concentrated in the rural areas in order to give a tough fight to the Congress Party. The Sangh in its manifesto declared its interest in developing agriculture and cottage industries, free and compulsory education, co-operative societies, reduction in administrative expenditure, security of life and property, cheap and easy justice, uplift of backward communities and rehabilitation of refugees.

The Socialist Party was new to Saurashtra. Its campaign was rather mild. A number of public meetings were organised by the party. Socialists recited their achievements at Mahuva where they controlled the local Municipality. The party refused to have an election alliance with the K.M.P.P., according to a party spokesman because of the K.M.P.P.'s doubtful affiliations and associations. "A cup of milk for every child!" was the slogan of Shri. T. K. Sahani, the Socialist candidate for the House of the People from Bhavnagar.

The Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Jan Sangh based their election campaign on opposition to the Hindu Code Bill and cow-slaughter, and a firm policy towards Pakistan.

The Communist Party, the Forward Bloc (Marxist) and the Scheduled Castes Federation were almost absent from the field of election propaganda in the state.

The Independents did not stress any particular issue, but relied on their personal prestige and resources for winning the elections.

## POLLING AND ELECTION RESULTS

Polling in Saurashtra was peaceful and orderly. Nearly 50 per cent of the total electorate voted in the elections. Two Congress candidates and one Socialist were elected unopposed to the Assembly. A Socialist candidate secured one of the four seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes, while



the Congress candidates secured the general and the only reserved seat for the Scheduled Tribes. The Congress Party's victory in Saurashtra was sweeping. It won 55 out of 59 seats it contested for the Assembly and polled 63.81 per cent of the total votes cast. The remaining five seats went to the opposition, of which two went to the Socialists, two to the Independents and one to the Khedut Sangh. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh, the K.M.P.P., the Communist Party, the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) failed to win even a single seat in the state legislature. Out of the six House of the People seats, the Congress Party had secured one without contest. The remaining five seats were also won by the Congress with 65.58 per cent of the total votes cast.

## CONCLUSION

The Congress Party in Saurashtra is very strong. The opponents of Congress seem to have no chance of unseating it, at least in the immediate future. Caste did exercise some influence in the choice of the electorate. The Congress Party drew its support from Kadav Kunbis, while the Khedut Sangh was supported by Lava Kunbis. Three women contested the elections to the Assembly. Two of them belonging to the Congress Party were elected. The only Muslim elected to the state Assembly belongs to the Congress Party and was elected unopposed for a seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. All the four nominees of the Congress Party were elected unopposed to the Council of States.

# 16 TRAVANCORE- COCHIN

K. P. PILLAY  
*Travancore University*  
*Trivandrum*

*Area: 9,144 sq. miles*  
*Population: 92,80,425*  
*Electorate: 42,10,244*

		House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats	.. ..	12	108
Constituencies	.. ..	11	97
Uncontested seats	.. ..	—	4
Contesting candidates	.. ..	47	437
Valid votes polled	.. ..	34,90,476	33,98,193
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies	.. ..	71	69.9

## INTRODUCTION

The State of Travancore-Cochin lies in the extreme south-west of the Indian peninsula. It is the most thickly-populated state in the Indian Union with the exception of Delhi. The average density of population is 1,015 per square mile. In the rural areas the density is 881 per square mile and in the urban areas it is 4,991.

The population of the state consists mainly of Hindus, Christians and Muslims: the Hindus constituting about 60 per cent; the Christians about 32 per cent and the Muslims about 7.8 per cent. Scheduled Castes constitute about 12 per cent of the population. Although there is scarcely any racial difference between these communities, the diversity in their modes of living and social customs is pronounced. The con-

sequent disharmony in communal relations, though not as violent or as rancorous as in parts of North India, remains an important factor influencing political life in the state.

Travancore-Cochin is the most advanced state in the Union in terms of literacy. The percentage is 64.47 for males; 43.23 for females; and 53.76 for the total population. There are in the state over fifteen lakhs school-going children; over 25,000 receive instruction in colleges.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

Out of the total population a little less than 50 per cent were entitled to vote in the General Elections. They were to elect a state Assembly of 108 members and 12 members to the House of the People. For the elections to the Assembly, 97 constituencies were demarcated, 86 being single-member and 11 double-member. Eleven seats in the Assembly were reserved for the 12 per cent Scheduled Castes population. For the election of 12 members to the House of the People there were 11 constituencies, ten single-member and one double-member. One of these 12 seats was reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

Polling in the state commenced on December 10, 1951 and concluded on January 5, 1952. For 97 Assembly and 11 House of the People constituencies there were 6,130 polling booths. Polling was very heavy as was expected.

The Congress Party, the ruling party since the formation of the union of Travancore and Cochin States, was reduced to a minority party with 43 seats in the state Assembly of 108 members. The Congress secured only slightly less than 35 per cent of the total votes polled. The main opposition to the Congress Party came from the United Front of Leftists (U.F.I.), a combination of the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Kerala Socialist Party. The Socialist Party secured only eleven seats against its expectation of securing a majority in the Assembly. Amongst the local parties, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress (T.T.N.C.) was able to win an appreciable number of seats, 8 out of 15 contested.

*The Congress Party won 5 out of 12 Parliamentary seats. The Independents belonging to the U.F.L. and the R.S.P. together won four seats. T.T.N.C. won one seat; the remaining two seats were secured by the Independents, one of whom was supported by the U.F.L.*

## POLITICAL PARTIES

### *The Congress Party*

The Congress put up 104 candidates for the state Assembly of whom 43 were returned. Of the ten candidates put up for election to the House of the People, five were returned. The failure of the Congress to secure a majority of seats has been ascribed to various reasons. The selection of candidates was not always based on principles; in some constituencies the choice of candidates was to some extent based on communal factors. It is said that mistakes were committed in a few cases in the choice of constituencies for prominent members of the party. There was a splitting of votes due to the rush of Independent candidates with considerable local influence. Voting in some constituencies was mainly on communal lines. According to some political observers, the merger of the Democratic Congress (a dissident group in the old Assembly Congress Party) with the Congress Party on the eve of the elections lowered the prestige of both in the eyes of many and exposed both to the charge of political opportunism.

### *The Socialist Party*

The Socialist Party is an infant party in Travancore-Cochin. It was strengthened by the addition of certain top-ranking leaders who had recently left the Congress.

The Socialists' election programme was the same as for the rest of India. They had a very small following drawn mainly from the middle class. The personal influence of the party's leaders, rather than the appeal of the party programme, was the main factor in the party's strength. Out of 69 candidates put up for the state Assembly, only eleven were returned and none was returned to the House of the People even though nine candidates contested on the Socialist

ticket. The defection of certain leaders of the Congress and their migration into the Socialist camp (for personal and other reasons) confused the issues and puzzled the electorate creating a difficult situation for both parties. Some of these persons had in former days publicly given vent to anti-socialistic sentiments. The voters thus were suspicious of the bona fides of the socialist newcomers. Few had faith in the stability and prospects of the party. Moreover there was a widespread belief that there was nothing radically different between the Congress and the Socialist programmes. Among other factors contributing to the failure of the Socialists were the lack of a well-organised party machinery and its position as a middle-ground party. The leader of the Socialists in the state, Shri. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai, was the head of the state Congress Party for several years and Chief Minister in the first Congress Government. He was supported by some deserters from the Congress and some right-wing labour leaders. Unqualified support was given to the Socialist Party by the *Malayali* and the *Express*, two Malayalam dailies. Another Malayalam daily, the *Malayala Rajiyam* gave support to a few Socialist candidates.

### *The Revolutionary Socialist Party*

The R.S.P. issued a 22-point election manifesto, the key points of which were: (1) nationalisation of key and basic industries; (2) liquidation of all forms of landlordism without compensation; (3) re-distribution of present landholdings in an equitable way; (4) reduction of prices of essential articles; (5) complete withdrawal from the British Commonwealth of Nations; (6) alliance with the U.S.S.R. and China; and (7) maintenance of peaceful relations between India and Pakistan. The Revolutionary Socialist Party had a considerable following among factory workers and students. It was strongly opposed to both the Congress and the Socialist Party for their alliance with the "Anglo-American bloc" and the "capitalists." Active workers of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and trade union leaders were nominated. The R.S.P. stood for a United Kerala. It was violently opposed to the Congress and accused it of alliance with the Anglo-American capitalists and land-

lords. Support was given to the R.S.P. by *Kaumudi* (a weekly) and *Keralam* (a daily). Its leadership was drawn from active trade union workers like Messrs. N. Sreekanth Nair, K. Balkrishnan and Diwakaran. The election campaign was conducted by the R.S.P. in alliance with the Communists and the Kerala Socialist Party in the U.F.L.

### *The Communist Party*

Although the C.P.I. was banned in the state at the time of the election, its members contested seats as Independents and as candidates of the United Front of Leftists. The Kerala committee of the Communist Party of India drew up an election manifesto for the whole of Kerala—Travancore-Cochin and Malabar included. The party being banned in the state, the Travancore-Cochin committee's 16-point manifesto was published as the manifesto of Shri. M. N. Govindan Nair, the party's Secretary. The points emphasized were: (1) autonomy for linguistic areas; (2) incorporation of Tamil-speaking areas of Travancore-Cochin in Tamil Nad; (3) the raising of Travancore-Cochin to the status of a Part "A" state; (4) abolition of the office of Rajpramukh; (5) confiscation of the landed properties of big landlords and zamindars; (6) nationalisation of estates and factories owned by foreigners; (7) a guarantee of complete civil liberties and protection of the petty bourgeoisie.

The party's following was drawn from workers in organised industries, students and a section of the middle class. The chief target of its attack was the Congress and its administration, particularly the food, labour and land policies of the Congress Government. Party workers, United Leftist Front workers and sympathisers, as well as men of local influence, were nominated. The main local issue emphasized by the Communists was that of United Kerala and the separation of the Tamil areas from Kerala. Support was extended to them by the dailies *Keralam* and *Novalokam* and by a number of weeklies like *Kaumudi* and *Aikyamunnani*. Leadership was drawn from party members and trade union leaders; the most prominent among these were Comrades K. C. George, T. V. Thomas, M. N. Govindan Nair, P. T.

Punnoose and Chelat Achutha Menon. The strategy of vote-catching adopted by the party was chiefly marked by a violent abuse of the Congress, especially for its failure to tackle the food problem, and its policy of repression of the Communists.

### *The Kerala Socialist Party*

The programme of the Kerala Socialist Party was little different from that of the Communist and R.S.P., except that the Kerala Socialist Party stood for the establishment of an independent, sovereign Republic of Kerala. The leaders of the party are Comrades Mathai Manjooran, M. P. Menon, John Manjooran, Chummar and Soolapani.

### *Formation of the United Front of Leftists*

On the eve of the elections, the Communists, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Kerala Socialist Party in the state formed a United Front of Leftists. The Socialist Party in Travancore-Cochin refused to join. A joint programme was drafted and candidates were jointly put up in 80 constituencies, including eight for Parliamentary seats. These figures include the 12 Independent candidates supported for the Assembly and three for the House of the People. The joint manifesto agreed upon called for the abolition of landlordism, restoration of civil liberties, better living conditions for workers and the establishment of a "People's State." The United Front extended its support to Socialist Party candidates where the Front did not put up its own, viz. the Attingal and Karthikapally constituencies; and in certain places withdrew their candidates where the Socialist Party had a chance to defeat the Congress, as in Changanncherry and Kottarakkara. Although the candidates put up by the U.F.L. were comparatively poor, they were greatly helped in their campaigns by a large number of volunteers and contributions by labourers and other sympathisers from among the middle class. There was greater party loyalty and discipline among the ranks of the U.F.L. than among the other parties.

### *The Tamil Nad Congress*

Under the leadership of Shri. Thanulingam Nadar, the

Tamil Nad Congress demanded immediate separation of all Tamil-speaking areas of the state, and their union with Tamil-Nad. It put up ten candidates for the state Assembly and one for the House of the People, none of whom, however, secured election.

#### *The Travancore Tamil Nad Congress*

The T.T.N.C. was composed of dissidents from the Tamil Nad Congress ranks under the leadership of Shri. Nesamony. For the present, they only wish the Tamil areas to be constituted into a linguistic unit within the political framework of the Travancore-Cochin State, but ultimately when the Congress policy regarding linguistic provinces is fully implemented, these areas are to be separated and united with Tamil Nad. The party put up 15 candidates for the Assembly of whom eight were returned. The one candidate who competed on the party ticket for the House of the People was also elected.

#### *The Tamil Nad People's Front*

This front was an extremist political group formed at the time of election. In some respects it resembled the U.F.L., and it based its election appeal on a programme more or less similar to the U.F.L. It put up candidates for two seats in the state Assembly of whom none was returned.

#### *The Travancore-Cochin Republican Praja Party*

The Republican Praja Party was organised by some rich landlords and capitalists. None of the candidates put up by the party was returned. Although it enjoyed immense financial resources, it had little support from the people.

#### *The Cochin Party*

Confined to Cochin, this party is the offspring of provincial and anti-Travancorean feeling on the part of some Cochinites. Their goal is the disintegration of Travancore-Cochin and the restoration of the identity of Cochin as a distinct unit. Though they contested 12 seats in the state legislature and one for the House of the People, only one



candidate was returned to the Assembly.

## ELECTIONEERING

Propaganda work was in full swing several months before the date fixed for polling. Election tours, mass meetings, cycle rallies, singing squads, folk dances and other forms of demonstration (particularly in rural areas) were organised at considerable effort and expense by parties and Independent candidates alike. Pamphlets setting forth party programmes and, in the case of the Congress, past achievements were printed and widely circulated among the voters. Cases of persons who had sold their property to procure funds for election purposes, in the hope that success at the polls would provide opportunities not only to recoup the losses but also for further enrichment, have been reported. Propaganda tours by national leaders were conducted mostly on behalf of the Congress and the Socialist Parties, the most notable being those of Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri. Jayaprakash Narayan.

In regard to issues stressed by speakers, it has been found that as a rule the broad and intricate problems of national and international policy were stressed and their respective party positions explained to urban audiences, but the narrower and more intelligible issues of wages, land, food, agriculture and the lowering of prices (having a more intimate relation to their everyday life and needs) were discussed before the less educated rural folk. Few of the Independent candidates held mass meetings; some of those who addressed large audiences did so in meetings organised by leftist parties, whose support they had managed to enlist.

In point of organisation and resources, the Congress was the most favourably placed party. For one thing, it was the ruling party commanding more than 80 per cent of the seats in the last Assembly. It had the strong support of the landlords, capitalists, and the majority of the educated class who had not much affection for the leftist parties. The rich people supported the Congress Party even though they disapproved some of the more progressive aspects of its programme

because they feared the ascendancy of the leftist parties. The local leaders of the Congress frequently based their appeals on past glory and achievements, particularly the winning of freedom, the integration of the states, economic planning, food production schemes etc. They also pointed out that the Congress was the largest All-India organisation, that it had striven against tremendous odds to divert the energies and resources of the land into nation-building activities, and that it had been able to revolutionise Indian society in a constitutional, democratic and peaceful manner. In foreign policy, they pointed to the success with which the Indian Government steered clear of the two contending blocs, and consistently stuck to an independent course of action. They accused the Communists and their leftist allies for being agents of Moscow and warned the people against the profession and practice of violence by these parties. The attack of the Congressmen was also levelled against communal organisations and parties. They dissuaded the voters from supporting Independent candidates because the latter could not put into effect their ideas for lack of party organisation.

Speakers from the Socialist platform criticised the Congress administration as corrupt and weak. In their opinion it had not shown sufficient boldness in tackling the food and allied economic problems and also failed to nationalise the key industries and liquidate the landlords without compensation. After four years' exercise of power the Congress, according to the Socialists, had degenerated into a conservative and reactionary party. Its economic and financial policy had only served to aggravate the existing inequalities by increasing the affluence of the rich and intensifying the indigence of the poor. Their promises to the people consisted in a new approach towards the solution of the food problem by prevention of black-marketing and by the recruitment of a land army, the liquidation of zamindari and other forms of landlordism without the payment of compensation and the fixation of the maximum size of agricultural holdings. Their attitude towards the Communists was one of distrust as the latter were believed to be working under inspiration from Soviet Russia.

The leaders of the United Front of Leftists and their friends among the Independents thundered against both the Congress and the Socialists for betraying the country and the people, although this did not prevent the United Front from supporting Socialist candidates in constituencies where they themselves did not put up an opponent. They dubbed the Congress administrators as exploiters and connivers at exploitation in alliance with feudal, capitalist and imperialist groups denying all chances to the masses to raise themselves from economic slavery. Another point of their attack against the Congress government was the suppression of civil liberties and the shelving of the question of Aikya Kerala or United Kerala. They bitterly attacked the Socialists for their half-hearted condemnation of the Congress and for giving the Congress a certificate of good conduct. According to them many Socialists were only discontented Congressmen devoid of any genuine socialistic outlook or tradition. They exhorted the people to assume a greater share of political responsibility and exercise more effective supervision of the administration. To enable the people to do this, the leftists made many promises, including decentralisation of administration, abolition of landlordism, restoration of complete civil liberties, minimum living conditions for workers, etc.

The Travancore Tamil Nad Congress and the Cochin Party were purely local organisations, the former working mainly in the Tamil-speaking areas of south Travancore, and the latter confining itself to Cochin.

The Independents presented an interesting variety in their appeals to the electorate. Except those who worked in conjunction with one or another of the parties, few had any opportunity to address public meetings. They depended more on groups of hired workers, relatives and friends who went about from house to house distributing pamphlets and canvassing support. Some of them denounced party government as injurious to the real interests of the nation. Some of the candidates tried to justify their candidatures on the ground of the wealth of their official experience and knowledge. One stressed his knowledge of Hindi and the service rendered by him in spreading it as his best qualification. Most of them—

in fact all—promised to work for national and international progress and peace.

Most of the party symbols were intended to appeal to the minds of the workers and peasants. But strangely enough, the electorate in Travancore-Cochin, not excluding the most illiterate sections in it, was less attracted by symbols and slogans, and showed greater appreciation of the issues involved, than could normally be expected of a people working an infant democracy.

The usual slogans were "Congress ki jai," "I.S.P. is our party," "The triumph of the U.F.L. is the people's triumph," etc., and the familiar "Inquilab Zindabad" common to all leftists including the Socialist Party. Every day groups of processionists could be seen bawling out these and similar slogans, and shaking their fists into the air or at the onlookers, streams of sweat pouring down their weary temples and sunburnt necks, their eyes all ablaze with an animation quite uncomprehensible to themselves—rather a gruesome sight, which once made an astonished old woman ruefully ask me: "What! Does it mean that when they set up government, they will pound us all to death?"

Another familiar sight during the election season was the display of posters printed and hand-written on walls and wayside trees displaying the picturesque symbols of each party and pleading on behalf of its candidates. Innumerable public meetings were held, most of them with loud-speaker arrangements. These were addressed not only by candidates, but also by other prominent members of the parties and non-party sympathisers. Singing squads, folk dances and variety entertainments were all immensely popular in rural areas. Political scandals and recent incidents with political significance were dramatised in a vivid manner. These activities, carried on chiefly by the workers of the United Front of Leftists helped to rouse the interests and secure the votes of the rural population, especially the women folk.

## THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

The press played an active role in the recent elections.

It performed two important functions: it helped to educate the voter; and to disseminate propaganda. Very few of the newspapers preserved balance of judgement and strict impartiality. Educative work was practically confined to the publication of the rules of procedure and explanatory notices issued by the Election Commissioner or his subordinates elucidating difficult points and describing polling arrangements. Propaganda was carried on with great enthusiasm. Leading and special articles in the dailies and weeklies exalted and glorified the candidates of their choice; they ran down the candidates of opposite parties by raking up their past or quoting against them their previous utterances. Short stories and poems full of pungent humour portraying the life of the masses and exposing the blemishes and shortcomings of opponents were published. Another device adopted to influence the voters was the publication of the prospects of the respective candidates.

## POLLING

Full facilities were provided to enable the voters to exercise their franchise with the minimum of inconvenience. The 6,130 booths were so distributed that none had need to walk more than two miles from his place of residence to the polling booth. Each booth was designed for 700 to 900 voters. Adequate arrangements were made for helping unlettered and inexperienced voters to exercise their franchise freely.

The percentage of voters who exercised their vote was very high for the state as a whole. The poorer sections of the workers and peasants were most enthusiastic. They not only helped the United Front of Leftists with their votes, but also actively collected funds for election expenses. As regards female voters, the greatest zeal was displayed by working class women. In certain taluks in Central Travancore, the number of women who exercised their vote exceeded that of men. But the attitude of the middle and upper class women and the intelligentsia in general was marked by a certain degree of apathy. The upper middle class elements were mostly indifferent, particularly in towns like Trivandrum.

## CONFIGURATION OF POLITICAL FORCES

*In the social and civic life of the state, several factors are seen working at cross purposes. Conflict of interests between capital and labour, landlord and tenant, between Hindu and Christian are but a few of the varied social and political discords which afflict the state.*

Communal considerations often prevailed over party affiliations or even class interests. Within the Christian community itself there was a clash between Catholics and non-Catholics. The Catholic church hierarchy emerged as an important force in the political arena. Although officially forbidden to take sides in the election, many of the priests are reported to have tendered political advice in addition to spiritual guidance. Some are said to have gone to the extent of warning devout Catholics against voting for a Communist.

Caste considerations also were in evidence. Ezhavas and others on the lower rungs of the caste ladder often find it difficult to get rid of their hatred towards caste Hindus. In spite of all efforts of the Hindu Mandal to unite all sections of the Hindu population, or at least to present an appearance of unity, caste conflict could not be wholly obviated; in some constituencies it proved a decisive factor. The desecration and destruction of the Sabarimala temple, a popular place of pilgrimage, alienated a considerable section of the Hindu population from the government and the Congress Party.

The economic discontent of the middle and lower classes was another important factor. At the prevailing price levels, subordinate officers with their usually big families find it hard to make both ends meet. Failure to bring down prices has affected middle class cultivators also; they find themselves in a situation which compels them to become black-marketeers and hoarders. High wages have raised the expenses of cultivation. The procurement price of paddy is anything but adequate especially in view of the fact that the peasants have to buy all articles of necessity at highly inflated prices.

Some prejudices were at work also. A kind of helpless wrath had been accumulating in the minds of consumers and

buyers notably against ration shop-keepers. The association of any party with such people most certainly lowered its prestige in the eyes of the generality of the voters. The ration shop-keepers were found in many cases to support the Congress. The upper and middle class land-owners and agriculturists did not in many cases support the Congress because they resented the system of controls.

## CANDIDATES AND PARTIES

The list of names of candidates for the general elections presents a most bewildering variety: advocates, pleaders, businessmen, editors, ex-mayors, ex-ministers, doctors, political workers, social workers, students and teachers. The most important considerations which weighed with the parties in the choice of candidates were wealth, local influence and prestige, services rendered to the party, influence with the majority community in the constituency, and to a lesser extent, education. Wealth counted most, because a large portion, if not the whole, of the election expenses of a candidate were expected to be met by the candidate himself. Among the leftists particularly, educational standards were sacrificed to an extreme democratic spirit, leading to the choice of men of inferior educational equipment. Election speeches of party spokesmen and candidates were marked by the most subtle forms of self-glorification. Some appeared before their audiences clothed in rags, their hair purposely rumpled and untidy in an attempt to identify themselves with the masses. The wives or mothers of candidates who were in prison or had gone underground addressed meetings to enlist the sympathy of audiences. It is said that in a few constituencies votes were sold and purchased. Some voters could be persuaded to walk up to the polling station only by the glitter of silver, pan, beedies and cigarettes; toddy and other intoxicating drinks had to be liberally supplied to agents, workers and voters. Votes were canvassed in the name of religion, caste, class, functional and sectional interests, blood or matrimonial relationship, economic, social and political reform, preservation of law and order and even the abandonment of prohibition.

## ATTITUDES OF VOTERS TO ELECTIONS

In regard to the attitude of voters, hope and enthusiasm mingled with scepticism. The working classes have shown a high degree of political consciousness; the middle classes were lukewarm; while the richer classes made an organised attempt to exert their influence. Middle-aged and elderly people appeared to be for the Congress or the Socialist Party, while the youth, even from some rich and influential families (including large sections of the student population), zealously championed the leftist cause; in rural areas the youth seemed to have won over the elders to their side.

## LOCAL ISSUES

One of the foremost local issues stressed by all leftist parties was the question of raising Travancore-Cochin to the status of a Part 'A' State. The separation of Tamil-speaking areas was emphasized by the Tamil Nad Congress, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress and the Communists and other leftists. The sole aim of the Cochin Party was the restoration of Cochin to its former political status. Yet another local issue was the thorny problem of the integration of the services in Travancore and Cochin, an outcome of the integration of the two states. The Socialist Party in Travancore-Cochin demanded that the integration of services should be done by an impartial tribunal.

## POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ELECTION

The results of the election gave rise to the feeling that under the circumstances Cabinet instability is not only likely but inevitable. At the same time it is possible that the Congress leaders may be awakened to a new sense of duty towards their party and the state. The magnitude of their recent reverses and the presence of a strong and vigilant opposition, it is hoped, will compel the Congress to exert their utmost for the good of the country.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the Cabinet



formed by Shri. John (Congress Party) is not without elements of strength and popularity calculated to ensure its continuance until the next election. With a stable Ministry and a powerful Opposition, Parliamentary Government is at present functioning satisfactorily in Travancore-Cochin. As the party holding the balance of power between the Congress and the leftists, the Socialist Party has acquired an importance much greater than that indicated by the number of its members.

# 17

## AJMER

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 2,417 sq. miles*  
*Population: 6,93,372*  
*Electorate: 3,29,484*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats ..	2	30
Constituencies ..	2	24
Uncontested seats ..	—	—
Contesting candidates	8	134
Valid votes polled ..	1,78,999	2,34,788
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..	54.3	50.7

### INTRODUCTION

Ajmer is one of the ten Part 'C' States in the Indian Union. For the last 150 years Ajmer has been ruled by the Central Government through a Chief Commissioner. The people of Ajmer were for the first time given the opportunity to elect their rulers by their free choice on the basis of adult franchise in 1951-52.

Ajmer City has a big workshop of the Western Railway and a few other industries. In other parts of the state, agriculture is the main occupation of the vast majority of the population. Ajmer is a food deficit area. The government's main problem is the tackling of near-famine conditions prevailing in three-fourths of the state.

Like all other Part 'C' State Assemblies, the Ajmer Legislative Assembly has very limited authority.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

Polling in Ajmer began on January 12 and concluded on January 22, 1952. Elections were held for 30 seats in the Legislative Assembly and two in the House of the People. Out of the 30 Assembly seats, six were reserved for the Scheduled Castes. There were 24 constituencies for Assembly elections. Eighteen of them were single-member and six double-member. Two single-member constituencies were created for election of two members to the House of the People. Arrangements made for recording the votes were satisfactory and worked well.

## PARTIES IN THE STATE

The Congress Party in Ajmer, as elsewhere, is the strongest and relatively the best organised party in the state. But it suffers from internal rivalries. The *Hindustan Times* correspondent reported that "factiousness is excessively active and has been responsible for some very queer persons being given the Congress ticket. Some of the candidates, I am told, have not even signed the party pledge." (*Hindustan Times*, January 12, 1952.) The Jan Sangh was organised a few weeks before the elections. It was actively supported by the volunteers of the R.S.S. The Purusharthi Panchayat was also organised a few weeks before the elections by leading refugees. It was supported mainly by Sindhi refugees (numbering about 70,000) who have settled down in Ajmer. Communist and Socialist influence was confined to the working people in the city of Ajmer. They did not have any support in other sections of the population.

## ELECTION ISSUES

The Congress Party depended on its record in the freedom struggle for getting votes in the elections. Party spokesmen also stressed "the historic role of the organisation at the present time as a force of stability and a force for progress." Shrimati Vijaya Laxmi Pandit visited the state to campaign

for Congress candidates. The Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajya Parishad opposed the Hindu Code Bill and cow slaughter. The Jan Sangh also advocated the withdrawal of the Kashmir dispute from the United Nations and demanded compensation to refugees for their properties left in Pakistan. The Purusharthi Panchayat gave expression to the grievances of refugees and demanded more relief for them. The Socialists and Communists raised the familiar slogans of land to the tiller and nationalisation of industries. Near—famine conditions in many parts of the state were severely criticised by them. Door-to-door campaigns, posters, handbills, public meetings and processions were some of the means of election propaganda adopted by contesting parties and the Independents. Leaders of various parties visited the state for campaigning for their candidates.

## POLLING AND ELECTION RESULTS

Five parties and seventy-eight Independents contested 30 seats for the state Assembly. The Congress Party won 20 out of 29 seats it contested, including five out of six seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Of the 20 Congressmen elected to the state Assembly, three were Muslims. There was no woman candidate for the elections either to the State Assembly or to the House of the People. The Socialist Party and the Communist Party failed to win even a single seat. Both the House of the People seats were secured by the Congress Party, defeating all opponents by comfortable margins. The remaining ten seats were won by the Purusharthi Panchayat (3), the Jan Sangh (3), and the Independents (4). Refugees generally favoured the Purusharthi Panchayat. Polling was peaceful and orderly. 54.3 per cent of the electorate voted in the elections to the House of the People and 50.7 per cent in the elections to the Legislative Assembly.

A marked feature of the elections was the complete rout of the leftist parties. The Communists and the Socialists together, did not poll even two per cent of the total votes cast in the elections to the Assembly.

# 18

## BHOPAL

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 6,878 sq. miles*  
*Population: 8,36,474*  
*Electorate: 4,19,970*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	2	30
Constituencies .. ..	2	23
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	1
Contesting candidates .. ..	6	90
Valid votes polled .. ..	1,69,457	2,26,220
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..	40.3	38.1

### INTRODUCTION

Bhopal State, with a total area of 6,878 square miles, is one of the ten Part 'C' States in the Indian Union. Previously ruled by the Nawab of Bhopal, it was taken over by the Government of India in 1948, and administered by the Central Government since then through a Chief Commissioner.

Bhopal is a deficit State. Its total annual revenue is about Rs. 2 crores. Literacy among the state's adult population is about 10 per cent. In the city of Bhopal there are a few industries, mainly small textile mills. In other parts of the state, the main occupation of the people is agriculture.

The autonomy of Bhopal is limited; under the Government of Part 'C' States Act, 1951, the state Assembly can exercise only limited authority, and the Chief Commissioner, instead of being a constitutional head of the state is invested

with most of the executive powers.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

*General Elections were new to the people of this state; they had never voted before. In the general elections more than 50 per cent of the people were entitled to vote. Under the Government of Part 'C' States Act, 1951, Bhopal was to have a representative Assembly of 30 members. Along with the Assembly, the voters were to elect two members to the House of the People. Of the voters, nearly 40 per cent were women.*

For the 30 Assembly seats there were 23 constituencies, 16 single-member and seven double-member. Out of the 30 seats five were reserved for the Scheduled Castes and two for the Scheduled Tribes. The tribes in Bhopal are known as Gonds; they live mostly in the forest areas of Silwani and Goharganj. No House of the People seat was reserved either for the Scheduled Castes or for the Scheduled Tribes.

As many as 444 polling booths were provided in the 23 state Assembly and two House of the People constituencies. Polling was peaceful and orderly. The state government and the state election authorities had taken all possible care to see that the elections were conducted freely and fairly.

## PARTIES IN THE STATE

The Congress Party was the most important party. It was better organised than others and it had more resources at its disposal than any other party in Bhopal. The Congress Party had suffered considerable loss of prestige and loss in organisation when some of its members left the party and organised a party of their own known as the Kisan Mazdoor Mandal (otherwise known as "Nai Rah," i.e. *New Path*). The Congress suffered yet another loss on the eve of the elections in the death in a jeep accident of Thakur Lal Singh, a leading Congressman of Bhopal and an M.P. But in spite of these losses, the Congress Party continued to be the strongest party in the state.

The Kisan Mazdoor Mandal was the main opposition to the Congress Party. Organised by left-wing Congress dissidents, the party claimed identity in policy and programme with the Peasants and Workers Party of Maharashtra. The party enjoyed the support of 10,000 mill workers of the state united under the Mazdoor Sabha, which was banned in 1948. Its President, Shri. Shakir Ali Khan, contested for the state Assembly on the ticket of the Kisan Mazdoor Mandal.

The Hindu Mahasabha was the only other old party in the state. It did not have any organisation, but in some parts of the state had some following. The Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Jan Sangh and the Scheduled Castes Federation had no organisation and no following. All of them had been organised a few weeks before the elections. Independent candidates did have considerable influence in their localities; lack of organisation was their main weakness.

## ELECTION ISSUES

The main election issue on which almost all parties agreed was the proposed merger of Bhopal with neighbouring Madhya Bharat, though opinions differed on details. The Congress Party primarily depended on its record of national service in the past. It defended the administration and claimed the abolition of the Nawab's rule as its achievement. The Kisan Mazdoor Mandal in its manifesto demanded the freezing of the privy purse of the Nawab amounting to over Rs. 16 lakhs per annum. The party stood for abolition of jagirdari without compensation. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajya Parishad opposed the Hindu Code Bill. The Socialist Party and the Communist Party demanded abolition of jagirdari, nationalisation of industries, etc. Posters, handbills, processions, public meetings and house-to-house canvassing were some of the means adopted by the parties and Independents for attracting the voters.

## POLLING AND ELECTION RESULTS

Polling in Bhopal began on January 11 and concluded on January 24. 40.35 per cent of the electorate voted in the

elections to the House of the People. The Congress Party won both the seats with overwhelming majorities.

In the elections to the 30 seats for the state Assembly, a little over 38 per cent of the electorate voted. The Congress Party secured 25 out of the 30 seats. One of the Congress candidates was returned unopposed. The Congress had to fight against serious opposition in two constituencies. In Barasia the state Congress chief, Dr. Shankar Dayal, won by a narrow margin of 121 votes over his Hindu Mahasabha rival. In Amravad the Congress candidate, Shri. Narbada Charanlal, won only by a margin of 26 votes over his Independent rival, Shri. Shamlal.

Polling varied from constituency to constituency. In *Abdulganj*, a small rural town in *Goharganj*, it reached 74 per cent, while in sparsely-populated hilly tracts it was about 25 per cent. In *Huzur*, *Shyampur*, *Goharganj*, *Wilwani*, *Amravad*, *Udaipuri* and *Deori* voting was about 45 per cent.

Among the candidates for the Assembly elections there were four women. Two of them belonged to the Congress Party and two to the Kisan Mazdoor Mandal. Two women candidates belonging to the Congress Party have been elected to the Assembly. For the two House of the People seats there was no woman candidate.

All other parties failed miserably. The Jan Sangh, the Socialist Party, the Kisan Mazdoor Mandal, the Communist Party, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Scheduled Castes Federation failed to win even a single seat. The Independents won four state Assembly seats and the remaining seat was won by the Hindu Mahasabha. There were six Muslim candidates set up by the Congress Party. Four of them have been returned to the Assembly and one to the House of the People. All five seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes have been won by the Congress Party, thus indicating that the newly formed Scheduled Castes Federation had little following among the Scheduled Castes population of Bhopal. But the two seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes have been won by Independent candidates, defeating Congress rivals with comfortable margins. The Gonds, primitive tribesmen living in the forest areas of *Silwani* and *Goharganj*, showed unusual



enthusiasm during the polling. Their women folk, too, voted in large numbers.

A marked feature of the elections in Bhopal, which were the first in its history, was the failure of the "leftist" parties to secure any representation. The Kisan Mazdoor Mandal, the only supposedly strong, local leftist party, consisting mainly of dissident Congressmen, lost heavily, eight of its 12 candidates forfeiting their security deposits.

# 19

## BILASPUR

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 453 sq. miles*  
*Population: 1,26,099*  
*Electorate: 68,130*

### House of the People

Seats	..	..	1
Constituencies	..	..	1
Uncontested seats	..	..	1
Contesting candidates	..		—
Valid votes polled	..	..	—
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies	..	..	—

Bilaspur is the smallest state in the Indian Union. Lying near the foothills of the Himalayas, Bilaspur is one of the most backward parts of India. It was previously ruled by a prince, but was taken over by the Central Government towards the end of 1948 and now is being administered by the Centre through a Chief Commissioner appointed by the President of the Republic.\*

No state legislature was granted to Bilaspur. The electorate of this tiny state were to elect only one member to the House of the People. But there was no election since the Congress' opponent of the Raja of Bilaspur, who was contesting the election as an Independent candidate, withdrew from the contest at the last moment. The Raja of Bilaspur was declared elected unopposed.

\* The state of Bilaspur was merged into Himachal Pradesh on July 1, 1954.

# 20 COORG

SHRIMATI S. BOLLAMMA THAMMAYYA  
(Government College, Mercara)

*Area: 1,586 sq. miles*  
*Population: 2,29,405*  
*Electorate: 94,593*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	1	24
Constituencies .. ..	1	18
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	—
Contesting candidates .. ..	2	60
Valid votes polled .. ..	63,813	88,047
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in con- tested constituencies .. ..	67	63.6

## INTRODUCTION

Until recently Coorg, a Part "C" state, has been free from bitter controversies in party politics. The reason for this can perhaps be ascribed to the modest-sized compact area of Coorg, far from centers of communal feeling. The only organised political party which transcends local interests and loyalties is the Congress which has a strong foothold. A semi-political association of landholders which had been formed in 1924 receded into the background when the Congress Party was organised in the state sometime in 1929. Ever since, the Congress Party of Coorg has followed in the footsteps of their brethren outside, taking an active part in the salt satyagraha and civil disobedience movements. A spirit of non-violence was observed in accordance with the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi, in spite of Coorgs being known mostly by the epi-

thet of "the warrior race." Nearly 150 courted imprisonment among whom six ladies took an active part.

All of the important leaders of Coorg have been staunch members of the Congress. The leaders of the two important parties who contested the elections fought the national battle for freedom and underwent imprisonment along with other national leaders. Internal dissensions of an earlier date were put aside for the sake of seeking freedom for the Indian nation. A split in the District Congress Committee of Coorg started about the year 1938 when a resolution was passed in the annual session of the Congress concerning the amalgamation of Coorg with one of its neighbouring provinces. This question, however, was forgotten in the struggle for the greater goal of self-government for India. Even in the individual satyagraha held in 1942, Coorg contributed more than her share. The Coorg Congress, in the meanwhile, was brought under the Provincial Congress Committee of Karnatak.

After the elections for the Legislative Assembly in 1945, a split was definitely noticed among Congress members, largely reflected in the Assembly on the question of merger and non-merger. When the election was held for choosing one member for the Constituent Assembly, the members of the Legislative Assembly were divided into two parties: merger and anti-merger. Out of the 11 Congress members in the Assembly, seven were for merger and four for non-merger. Two other independent members also favoured the views of the latter. Two Europeans and another five did not exercise their vote in this election.

The merger party has been fully supported by the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee. Speeches by the member representing Coorg in the Constituent Assembly, who was also the leader of the merger party, were strongly resented by the anti-merger party, and agitation began in Coorg for the retention of this province as a separate unit. In 1949 a Conference was held in Delhi in which both the groups were equally represented, led by the two leaders Shri. C. M. Poonacha and Shri. P. I. Belliappa (the latter was the leader of the anti-merger group), both staunch members of

the Congress. The main issues pressed by the two parties were on the following lines. The merger party wanted Coorg to be amalgamated with one of the major states on the basis of a linguistic redistribution of territories. Their argument was that Coorg was too small an area to be financially secure, especially if prohibition was introduced. Coorg, they argued, was industrially undeveloped. It was also argued that keeping her separate would encourage a narrow outlook among the people. The separationists contended that Coorg being a surplus area and largely agricultural, could be financially independent and secure particularly by introducing a levy on agricultural income. The other points of the anti-merger party were that Coorg had no cultural affinity with the neighbouring provinces and being socially, economically and politically far advanced, could safely rely on herself. They were not asking for anything new except to continue as they were, taking into consideration only the criterion of the financial ability of a province to govern itself without outside help. In fact, they wanted the question of the future of Coorg to be decided by the people of Coorg who have a permanent interest in their own province. The conference ended in a deadlock. It was decided that Coorg was to continue as before for the present until the question came up again. Certain general reforms were granted to all of the Part "C" states.

This question of merger became a keen point of contention when the preparations for the elections began with the delimitation of constituencies. An awareness of this problem of separation was noticed all over the country, and it has been largely reflected in the elections held in Coorg. It has been the only point of contention and political difference during the election. The split among the Congress members was no longer a factor to be set aside. Coorg was definitely divided into two groups: merger and anti-merger. Almost on the eve of the elections, an approach was made to the Central Election Board of the Congress to allow those of its members who wanted separation to contest the election on this issue, remaining at the same time the official candidates of the Congress Party; if that was not feasible, an alternative was suggested of not putting up any official Congress candidates

but to allow those from the two groups elected to the Legislative Assembly to be Congressmen after the election was over. The Election Board of the Congress decided that no exceptions could be made in the case of Coorg alone as it would involve going against the general principles and ideals of the Congress. Pandit Nehru issued a statement insisting that the question of the future of Coorg did not arise, and it would be better if it was not made an election issue; it would be a matter for decision by the people of Coorg and the Parliament only when the question came up again, at a later date. Over forty of the anti-merger group resigned their membership in the Congress Party to contest the election on the anti-merger question.

Of the other parties in Coorg, the Communists and the pro-Communists also joined in the contest. Communist influence was mostly confined to the estate labourers, particularly those from Malabar, and a few of the younger generation. This influence was only a recent growth and had not much backing in Coorg, all the more so as there were few extremes of wealth and poverty.

Communal feeling was conspicuous by its absence until the election when some communities voted for their own caste candidates. But taking Coorg as a whole, not much emphasis was laid on caste. The majority of the people were divided only according to the two major parties (merger and anti-merger). During the election campaign tactless propaganda was, no doubt, responsible for rousing communal feelings on the main ground that the majority community (Coorgs), being more advanced in every walk of life, was trying to dominate the other castes.

In Coorg there is not much difference between urban and rural areas except perhaps that the voters in the urban constituencies were more conversant with the mode of elections owing to periodic municipal elections.

## CANDIDATES AND PARTIES

The Election Commission recognised three symbols for the three different parties in the state. Owing to some un-

avoidable delay, the separationist party could not be given a separate symbol of their own, and so they contested as Independents under the symbol of a pair of scales. This symbol was also made use of by various other candidates who fought the elections without party organisations.

The Congress Party (merger group) had the symbol of a pair of yoked bullocks and their general manifesto was the same as that of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee. No reference was made to linguistic provinces in any of their manifestos. The Party was led by Shri. C. M. Poonacha. The Congress contested all the seats.

In the place of the veteran Congress members who resigned on the issue of merger, the Congress nominated candidates who, although not members of the Congress, agreed with its ideals and principles. Candidates were chosen on the basis of their popularity, integrity and service to the country. Shri. N. Somanna, the candidate chosen for the seat in the House of the People, was a member of the Congress and a prominent lawyer of Coorg belonging to the Gowdugal community. The leader of the Congress Party, Shri. C. M. Poonacha, was a member of the Constituent Assembly and is one of the veteran Congress leaders of Coorg who has taken a very active part in all the political movements of this province for which he underwent imprisonment thrice. He had served for some time as sub-editor of the weekly *Kodagu* and in 1941 served as the District Board President. He was elected to the Coorg Legislative Assembly from his home constituency and is now the Chief Minister of Coorg. The other prominent candidate of the Congress was Shri. K. Malappa—a Minister now and one of the leading lawyers of Coorg belonging to the Lingayat Community. He had served as a member of the Legislative Assembly, in addition to being the President of the Mercara Municipality re-elected in 1951. He was also elected from his home constituency with an overwhelming majority.

Shri. B. S. Kushalappa, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, was one of the four candidates who contested from Mercara town. The other parties which contested the election in this constituency were the anti-merger, the Inde-

pendent and pro-communist Independent. Shri. Kushalappa, won with a clean majority over the others. The Independent candidate lost his deposit. Shri. Kushalappa who had been reappointed as a Principal, resigned his post to contest the election. He is very well-known and popular, both as a good teacher and public speaker.

Of the other candidates of the Congress who have succeeded, one is the richest planter of the Brahman community. The Editor of the *Janma-Bhoomi* was also one of the Congress candidates who stood for the Virajpet constituency in which he was unsuccessful, as against his rival, a candidate of the anti-merger party.

The separationist or anti-merger party also put up the same number of candidates as the Congress. This party was purely local, without any alliance outside Coorg. Their manifesto laid great emphasis on the retention of the province of Coorg as a separate entity. In all other respects, their aims and objectives were the same as those of the Congress. The separatist party was led by Shri. P. I. Belliappa, also a veteran and staunch member of the Congress almost till the eve of the elections.

The anti-merger candidate chosen for the House of the People, Shri. K. T. Uthappa, a retired Assistant Commissioner of Coorg as well as a rich planter, was strongly against the amalgamation of Coorg with any other province. Of the candidates put up for the Legislative Assembly, one was from a very rich family of planters who won against his rival in his native place. Another was a retired District Educational Officer who resigned from the Congress on the issue of merger. The Muslim candidate put up by this party was a prominent merchant of Virajpet, where he won with a clear majority. The candidates of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes had been chosen by both parties on the basis of educational qualifications and services rendered to their communities. One of the candidates of the separatist party had joined on condition that the Sarvodaya plan of Gandhiji would be given importance. In their local manifesto, the separatist had given great prominence to the Sarvodaya scheme, along with all the other promises in the Congress manifesto.



The Communists put up two official candidates. They were led by Shri. C. Motayya, a staunch Communist belonging to the Coorg community. Owing to his absence, his place was taken up by his brother and Shri. B. Kuttappa. They had some influence among the younger generation and the labouring classes. Their manifesto ran on the same lines as that of the Communist Party of India.

All the other candidates, two of whom belonged to the Janata Party, contested as Independents under the symbol of a pair of scales. They had no party organisations nor any manifestos; propaganda was mainly carried out by house-to-house canvassing.

None of the candidates put up by the Congress lost his deposit. One among the separationist party lost his. Of the two official Communist candidates and six Independents, one of the Communists and four of the Independent candidates forfeited their deposits.

## ELECTIONEERING

Electioneering began in right earnest immediately after the nomination papers were filed in December 1951. Coorg suddenly became busy and lost its apathetic or sleepy look. Roads washed by the bright sunshine of spring became crowded and colourful. Groups were seen here, there and everywhere discussing the parties, the merits of the candidates, merger and anti-merger; the air became thick with the electioneering atmosphere of pamphlets, slogans, placards and symbols. Everywhere conversations ended finally with the coming elections. Vehicles carried colourful symbols and placards of candidates. Jeeps were busy plying to and fro displaying notices in large letters, bedecked with the national flags which were made use of by both the major parties. The red flag of the Communists was seen in shops and vehicles. The local manifestos of both the major parties were often shouted out by their respective agents. Both the parties displayed the same flag and photos of national heroes, particularly of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru. The processions of different parties followed each other in quick succes-

sion. Gandhiji and Nehru became bywords for all to be made use of to suit every end. Megaphones and various kinds of amplifiers were made use of in all the processions to shout the slogan of the two parties. "Vote for Congress and Secular Democracy", "Vote for Nehru-Government", were the most prominent of the slogans used by the Congress Party; while the separatists asked the people to vote for the Sarvodaya scheme of Gandhiji. The Communists made use of their national slogans of stopping exploitation of man by man and land for all. All these slogans were in the local language, Kannada, which is understood by almost all the people of Coorg. Sometimes slogans were also shouted in English.

All the three main parties in Coorg—the Congress, the Separationist or Anti-merger, and the Communists—had the same methods of electioneering: through public meeting, processions, house-to-house canvassing, distribution of pamphlets and displays of the pictures of national heroes. The Congress Party had some outsiders to address meetings. Shri. R. R. Diwakar, Minister for Information, addressed meetings in Mercara during his short stay in Coorg, explaining the ideals and principles of the Congress. These meetings were largely attended, particularly by the intelligentsia of Mercara. Shri. N. Kille, a member of the Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee, addressed public meetings in several important local centres a week prior to the polling. One of his meetings was disturbed by stone-throwing, resulting in injury to a few persons. Shri. Iddenabba, a Muslim leader and a close friend of the Congress, addressed group meetings of Muslims on behalf of the Congress Party. The Communist Party invited Shri. A. K. Gopalan who also addressed quite a few meetings in important centres of Coorg. The separationist party did not have any independent spokesman to address their meetings.

The Congress, in addition to its general manifesto explaining the principles, objective and aims of the party issued a local manifesto dealing with the improvement of the standards of Coorg. It stressed irrigation facilities, development of agriculture, removal of controls, settlement of the landless on the waste lands of government, cottage industries and the

eradication of malaria.

The anti-merger party also gave great prominence to all the local problems, stressing the need to keep Coorg separate for their satisfactory solution.

Electioneering became intense only a week prior to the day of polling. Open air and closed hall meetings were both common features. In open air meetings, jeeps and other vehicles were utilised as platforms. The audience usually consisted of a mixed congregation of all classes. Often an open forum was maintained and anyone who wished to speak was free to air his views unfettered. Minor scuffles were noticed here and there. But the crowds were generally very well-behaved and the audiences were seen to give a patient hearing to all the important candidates who chose to address them.

Although the Congress had definitely stated that the future of Coorg was not involved in the elections, nevertheless, the election in Coorg revolved round this issue of merger and non-merger and the people in Coorg, especially the intelligentsia, aligned themselves in the two parties of Congress and anti-merger according to their convictions and wishes as regards the future of Coorg. This feature was perhaps unequalled in intensity in any other province.

The propaganda and influence of Communist and Independent candidates were negligible compared with the intense canvassing carried on by the two major parties.

## THE PRESS

The *Kodagu* was edited by the leader of the anti-merger party, and the *Janma-Bhoomi* was edited by a Congress candidate who belonged to the merger party. These papers published in Kannad had a wide circulation. Throughout the elections the editorials and the comments on day-to-day proceedings were entirely partisan. Any article on the case for separation was welcome to the *Kodagu* while the *Janma-Bhoomi* made much of the letter addressed to the leader of the anti-merger party by Pandit Nehru in connection with

the resignation of some of the members from the District Congress Committee. This letter, incidentally, was also published in the *Kodagu* by the anti-merger party! A general article on the various aspects of the election was published by the *Kodagu* at the very beginning of the election process, clearly explaining the duties and responsibilities of voters and candidates.

## ELECTION RESULTS

The Congress won the House of the People seat. Out of the 24 candidates put up for the Assembly by the Congress, 15 were returned, including two each from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The remaining nine seats were won by the anti-merger or separationist party, out of which one each went to their candidates of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. No other party was able to win any seat in the elections.

## ROLE OF WOMEN

There was not a single woman candidate, nor has there been any organisation of women interested in the elections. Except for personal approaches made by women here and there for candidates who were their close relatives, women have not taken any important part either in canvassing votes or in attending meetings. Literacy is very high among women here, particularly among the majority community, and they do enjoy a great deal of personal freedom. Yet, watching the elections, one felt that the women were still too conservative to take an active part in politics.

Discussions on grounds of party feelings were rarely noticed among the members of a family. Heated discussions on the merits of the merger and anti-merger parties were quite a common feature among the members of different families but women rarely expressed opinions different from their men folk. But party feelings were so vehement that mothers and daughters were persuaded to come out of their homes by energetic fathers, brothers and husbands to vote

for the parties which they preferred. Personal approaches made to women by their close relatives must have paid good dividends, especially in the case of Independent candidates. During the polling, women were conspicuous both by the distinctive styles of their dress as by the quiet orderliness in which they exercised their right to vote.

## CONCLUSIONS

Elections in Coorg were fought on a fairly high level; the citizens gave an active, intelligent and, on the whole, orderly response to the call to vote. Party loyalties were a predominant feature here. The merger issue had become such a sensitive spot that in spite of the wishes of the government and the repeated assurances of Pandit Nehru to the contrary, it was the only point at issue. In this, Coorg has perhaps gone a lone way and has been apparently the only province which has fought out her elections with a local problem as the dominant issue.

When voters, particularly of the lower middle classes were questioned about the elections, political consciousness, as well as blissful apathy, vied with each other in their responses. In spite of the great influence of the Congress, certain poor peasants with interests in a small patch of land seemed to be quite impressed by the propaganda of the anti-merger party. They often replied in an enthusiastic manner: "Oh, we have been happy in Coorg. Why allow outsiders to interfere with us? At least we in Coorg do not lack rice and water." Certain others were cynical and apathetic and their replies were coupled with shafts of humour and bitterness: "People say that Congress has ruled us so far and given us all that we now have. It may be worse if other parties come to power. So, I voted for the Bullock!" To others, either party—that of the bullock or of the pair of scales—was immaterial and they had simply voted for some sort of symbol which had been shown to them as being the best of the lot. Yet others got suspicious when questioned and in their replies they stubbornly evaded all questions by saying that they had not exercised their vote. When certain villagers were ques-

tioned there was a counter query of "What does it matter to you? Is it not a secret ballot?" Such replies were generally rude, yet it was immensely heartening and refreshing to know that many in Coorg were able to answer questions in a way that revealed the high level of political consciousness which they had attained. No doubt the exercise of adult franchise is, by itself, a valuable education to the people, besides being a step forward towards the goal of secular democracy.

# 21 DELHI

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and  
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Area: 578 sq. miles  
Population: 17,44,072  
Electorate: 7,44,668

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	4	48
Constituencies .. ..	3	42
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	1
Contesting candidates .. ..	19	186
Valid votes polled .. ..	6,55,900	5,21,766
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..	57.9	58.5

## INTRODUCTION

Delhi State, with a total area of 578 square miles, is one of the smallest political units in the Indian Union. The importance of this minute Part "C" State is enhanced, however, by the presence of the Central Government in its midst. Delhi's population of 17,44,072 includes approximately 5,00,000 refugees from West Pakistan, with the people of the state concentrated in the rapidly expanding cities of Old and New Delhi and in the 348 villages which surround the capital.

Administered by the Central Government since 1912, Delhi has had no taste of local self-government. Thus the General Elections had a particular significance for this state. The fact that Delhi is the focal point of India's Government has resulted in the gathering there of all the bureaucratic paraphernalia of an immense country's administration. This

concentration probably has led to a kind of social smugness, not unnatural to bureaucratic locales everywhere. During the British regime Delhi became an administrative hub of the country, and little more. With Independence, it has become the real capital of India in political and administrative concerns, if not as yet in the domain of the intellect. But habits change slowly. That may explain the middle class apathy noticed during the elections, most dramatically recorded in the relatively little political interest shown by the inhabitants of prosperous, governmental New Delhi until the date of the polling itself.

Delhi is neither an industrial nor an agricultural state. There are four medium-sized cotton mills and a few other small factories, which together employ about 40,000 persons—little more than 2 per cent of the total population of the state. With less than 350 villages, the state is not well supplied with productive farms. It is a food deficit area, with the bulk of the deficit made up by imports of wheat from the Punjab and elsewhere. A combination of industry, agriculture, trade, banking, ancient handicrafts (mostly located in Old Delhi), and the business of government itself make up the occupational pattern of the state.

But the heavy influx of refugees has increased unemployment to alarming proportions and has placed a heavy burden on the Government of India for both housing and food. The refugees formed the largest single bloc of voters, nearly 42 per cent of the total eligible voters. As will be seen, the refugees were less powerful in representing their interests in this first election than might have been expected from their numbers. Future elections will test the strength of this displaced population more precisely.

The Constitution of India classifies Delhi as a Part "C" State. Part "C" States formerly were ruled by the Central Government through Chief Commissioners appointed by the President of the Republic. The Parliament of India in its budget session of 1951 passed an Act—Government of Part "C" States Act, 1951—XLIX of 1951—giving limited autonomy to six of the ten Part "C" states. Under this Act, Delhi was granted a Legislative Assembly of 48 members.



Thus "home rule," though with very limited autonomy, came to Delhi after 40 years of Central administration.

## THE GENERAL ELECTION

The voters of Delhi State were called to the polls on January 14, 1952 for exercising their franchise at one of the 896 polling booths that had been provided. Four seats in the House of the People (one reserved for the Scheduled Castes) were to be filled, as well as 48 seats for the state Legislative Assembly (six reserved for the Scheduled Castes). Constituencies for the House of the People had been demarcated previously, with two single-member constituencies (one each for New Delhi and Delhi City) and one double-member constituency (for the areas of Outer Delhi). Forty-two Legislative Assembly constituencies were provided, six of these being double-member. With 11,000 ballot boxes distributed to the polling booths, and with over 10,000 persons forming the official staff supervising the balloting, the formal machinery of the election was in order.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties had been at work in the state long before the polling day, organising their propaganda and directing party workers in a search for votes. Although the Congress Party was known to be powerful in Delhi, other less well-known groups also had considerable following.

The Congress Party had been recognised as the dominant party. Other parties now in the field are much younger, less experienced and do not have the elaborate organisation that the Congress Party has. The presence of the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in Delhi during most of the year makes it difficult for other parties to compete in attracting the people's attention. Nehru's impressive personality has been the main pillar of the Congress' strength in this state, as it has in most of the rest of the country. It was noticed that until Shri. Nehru undertook a series of election speeches in Delhi State, many non-Congress candidates seemed to have a

fairly good chance of winning. With few exceptions, Nehru's campaign turned the tide in the Congress direction.

After Independence, the Congress Party once before had tested its political strength. This was at the time of the hotly-fought Delhi municipal elections held on October 15, 1951. The Congress won 42 out of 50 seats in this local election and secured 49 per cent of the total vote. Such a decisive victory having been won in the municipal elections, the probable fate of the Congress' opponents in the elections to the state Assembly was clear to most observers. Fewer persons were willing, after that convincing demonstration of Congress power, to risk their money, time and effort in a trial of strength with an odds-on favourite.

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh came into existence just before the Delhi municipal elections were held. Jan Sangh as it came to be known popularly, was supported locally by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) and by other groups and individuals urging priority of attention being given to Hindu culture and tradition. It would be going too far to say that the Jan Sangh was the "political wing" of the R.S.S., though this charge had been made against it. But it is accurate to say that many R.S.S. followers did give political support to the Jan Sangh in the Delhi area. The Jan Sangh had high hopes of success in Delhi. But the municipal elections showed that though they were able to secure quite a large following (34 per cent of the total votes) the Jan Sangh had failed to win more than three out of the 47 seats it had contested. This defeat had been a lesson to the Jan Sangh organisers. For the General Elections they decided to contest only 28 of the 48 State Assembly seats, but to contest three out of the four seats for the House of the People.

The Socialist Party in Delhi, as elsewhere, came into being in 1948 when its members (formerly in the Congress) decided to form an independent party of their own. The Socialists' local organisational structure and party discipline left much to be desired when the General Elections came to test its claims for the voters' support. Even when they were in the Congress, the Socialists had developed valuable contacts among the working classes. Not much had been done

to cultivate the potential voters of the middle class or of the peasantry, however. The Delhi municipal elections served as an eye-opener to the Socialists. The Socialist Party had put up 18 candidates, but did not secure a single seat. The Socialists seemed to be wiser for the experience for they decided to concentrate on only half a dozen seats at the time of the General Elections. Lack of resources also was one of the concrete reasons which prevented the Socialist Party from operating on a more extensive basis in Delhi State.

Other parties, such as the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Communist Party of India, the Forward Bloc (Marxist), the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India, the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (K.M.P.P.) had very little political following in the state. However, Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani ran for a House of the People seat in New Delhi, thus giving the K.M.P.P. an able spokesman in the electioneering phases of the campaign.

Just before the elections were held, a Refugee Bloc was organised to oppose the Congress Party, but little was heard of this bloc during the elections.

## ELECTION ALLIANCES

Several election alliances were made for purposes of the Delhi election.

(a) The Socialist Party and the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation had entered into an election alliance in several states. In Delhi, the agreement was that the Socialist Party would support five Scheduled Castes Federation candidates for the Assembly (four for reserved seats and one for a general seat) and one (reserved seat) for the House of the People; the Scheduled Castes Federation, in return, would support six Socialist Party candidates for the Legislative Assembly.

(b) The Bharatiya Jan Sangh and Shiromani Akali Dal (Sikh Party) also entered into an election agreement. The Akali Dal did not set up any candidates of its own but agreed to support some of the candidates endorsed by the Jan Sangh.

(c) Efforts to form an election alliance between the Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad proved unsuccessful, as did efforts to form a bloc of Independents. Some Independent candidates were supported by the Jan Sangh. The Socialist Party supported two Independent candidates. The Communist Party of India also supported some Independents.

## ELECTION ISSUES

All the parties contesting the elections, except the Congress, sought to make political grievance of the limited nature of the autonomy granted to Delhi State. Party workers canvassed support on the plea that they wanted Delhi to enjoy the status of a Part "A" State in the Indian Union. Apart from allegations of corruption and inefficiency against the Congress Party, none of the parties except the Socialists and the Communists had much of a positive nature to say about the state's peculiar political and economic problems. Demands for the withdrawal of the recently-imposed sales tax and promises of a taxless life were the highlights of electioneering on the lower levels of party oratory.

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh promised to work for the development of a non-communal, patriotic and integrated society. The Jan Sangh, according to its General Secretary, was not "communal"; under a Sangh regime, Muslims and other religious minorities would be encouraged to play their "natural" role in the national life. The Jan Sangh stood for universal military training and increased production.

The Socialist Party concentrated its fire on what was called "the half-hearted autonomy" granted to Delhi. The Socialists stated that they would prefer a corporation for governance, with wide powers. The Socialists also advocated a policy of land reforms (without compensation to landlords), nationalisation of industries and an equitable distribution of wealth. They also demanded withdrawal of the local sales tax.

The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party was opposed to economic controls because they were said to breed corruption. The party stood for "cleaner administration." Shrimati Sucheta

Kripalani, the K.M.P.P. candidate for the House of the People seat for New Delhi, was opposed to any kind of autonomy for Delhi State in the interests of national economy and of the individual tax-payer's pocket book.

The Communist Party of India, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) candidates pledged themselves to fight for full democratic powers for the state, as well as for the abolition of the sales tax and electricity tax. These parties wanted a priority to be given to housing for workers, refugees and the middle classes which together constitute nearly half of the population of Delhi. Confiscation of British (foreign) assets in India and the abolition of landlordism without compensation also formed part of their electoral programme.

The Ram Rajya Parishad's anchor sheet seemed to be its opposition to the Hindu Code Bill and to the slaughter of cows.

The Independents' plea was that as they were free from Party discipline, they alone could safeguard democracy on a non-partisan basis.

## **ELECTIONEERING**

Novel methods were adopted by some candidates to attract the attention of voters.

One Independent candidate, Shri. D. G. Kulkarni from the Reading Road (General) constituency, set much store by the camel, his election symbol. On one occasion, Kulkarni organised a procession of camels, with the candidate himself leading the first camel. Another Independent, Jung Bahadur Singh, was seen moving about during broad day-light with a lighted lantern (his election symbol), ringing a bell. This odd activity attracted a large audience to street-corner meetings. The Congress Party took out a procession of yoked bullocks (the party's election symbol). The Scheduled Castes Federation candidate for the House of the People led another procession, himself seated on an elephant (his election symbol), while a Socialist candidate headed a parade in his constituency with a big tree (Socialist Party symbol) carried in

front of the group. Numerous processions and thousands of meetings were organised by contestants, many of them colourful and most of them well attended.

An interesting sidelight was noticed in the Manakapura constituency where an astrologer issued a poster prophesying a Congress victory. But in this instance the stars failed their observer for a Socialist won the seat.

The Congress Party depended mainly on the goodwill and gratitude of the people for Independence having been won under Congress leadership, an Independence for which the Congress claimed sole credit. The main theme of Congress propaganda was that no other party could consolidate or safeguard the Independence of the country; to dislodge the Congress from power would, its spokesmen asserted, be to hand over the country to chaos. Shri. Nehru addressed eight major election meetings in the state. Although he admitted that there were weaknesses in the Congress, he too struck the same historical note. Shri. Nehru bitterly criticised communal organisations like the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Akali Dal. About the K.M.P.P. and the Socialists, Shri. Nehru said that there was not much difference in ideology between each of them and the Congress. The leaders of the K.M.P.P., Nehru said, merely had personal grievances against the Congress. Nehru criticised the Socialist Party for being unrealistic in its programme. He accused the Communists of violence, disruptionist tendencies and of fostering counter-revolution.

Prime Minister Nehru was the main positive argument of the Congress in so far as its promises about the future were concerned. One of the posters issued by the Congress Party carried Shri. Nehru's picture with the following inscription: "For a Stable, Secular and Progressive State, Vote Congress." The poster was widely used in the state and was effective in gaining attention. There were other posters issued by the Congress, mainly to focus attention on achievements of Congress Governments since Independence. But it is doubtful whether these special posters carried as much weight as the simple one bearing Shri. Nehru's picture. Compared with other parties, the Congress also had the advantage of press-

ing into service leading political personalities such as Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shrimati Indira Gandhi and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The Jan Sangh emphasized Congress' failures, the divisions in the country, appeasement of Pakistan and also expressed concern for the preservation of Hindu culture. Every effort was made to win over the refugees by raising the refugee grievances in debate. Abuse from Pakistan was a persistent theme of the Jan Sangh, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, M.P., President of the Jan Sangh, addressed a number of meetings in the city and its neighbouring villages. Mookerjee refuted the charge levelled against the Jan Sangh that it was a communal organisation. He blamed the Congress Government for economic difficulties in the country. Mookerjee also denied that the Hindu Mahasabha ever agreed to the partition of the country. (Dr. S. P. Mookerjee was President of the Hindu Mahasabha at the time of the partition of India.)

The Jan Sangh's policy seemed to be to give a straight fight to the Congress. It withdrew two of its own candidates in favour of Independents who it appeared had a better chance of defeating the Congress. The Jan Sangh also brought out a number of posters and handbills. One of the posters stated: "Consequences of Partition: Blunders of Congress have brought so many misfortunes." There also were caricatures depicting a map of India with a sword dug into its left side. The Jan Sangh, according to its spokesmen, had enrolled 15,000 volunteers for its election work. Their constant endeavour appeared to be to refute Shri. Nehru's charge that the Jan Sangh, was a communal organisation. Part of this anxiety may be due to the fact that there was a large Muslim vote in Delhi. Some Sangh speakers claimed that they had in their ranks "Muslims, Christians and Parsis too." A Muslim from Uttar Pradesh was prominent as a speaker favouring the Jan Sangh in Delhi on one occasion.

The Socialist Party carried house-to-house canvassing to the constituencies in which it put up candidates. The Socialist election campaign was opened by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia in early December, 1951. The Socialist theme laid heavy emphasis on the party's economic programme. The party did not

organise many meetings, nor did it issue many posters. One poster bearing the picture of a *banayan* tree (Socialist election symbol) and with the caption, "Vote Socialist," was seen at many places. A week before the election, the party brought out a poster carrying part of a speech given by Shrimati Krishna Hutheesing, printed and headlined: "Congress is leading the country to disaster, says Shri. Nehru's sister."

Acharya J. B. Kripalani and Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani (K.M.P.P.) addressed a number of meetings in Delhi State, mainly in New Delhi. The K.M.P.P. emphasis in propaganda was on the need for an honest and clean administration. Shri. J. B. Kripalani's charge was that the Congress Party had forgotten the Gandhian way; that there was much corruption and nepotism in Government; and that the people had lost faith in the Congress. The K.M.P.P., he asserted, stood for "closing the gap" between the highest and lowest incomes, removal of controls, and a "better deal" for the peasants, workers and middle classes. It was curious that in K.M.P.P. propaganda not much prominence was given to the party itself; the personality of Shrimati Kripalani, the only candidate standing for the House of the People in the state on behalf of the K.M.P.P., received almost all the party's attention. It was true that the candidate (in this case) was much better known than the party. A poster issued by the K.M.P.P. showed a man with a white cap bleeding from an attack by a blow to the head, with the inscription: "To give a death-blow to the black marketeer, Vote Sucheta Kripalani." An auto-rickshaw and a motor lorry with thatched huts (K.M.P.P. election symbol) on them travelled around the city distributing K.M.P.P. election literature.

The Communist Party tried to form a united front among the "left opposition" groups. The Communists criticised the "police" pattern of Delhi administration and promised to make every effort for its transformation into a "people's administration." They advocated confiscation of British (foreign) assets in India, the abolition of French and Portuguese possessions in the subcontinent, the severing of India's relations with the Commonwealth, keeping aloof from "Anglo-American war conspiracies," strengthening the "peace front," etc. Shrimati



Aruna Asaf Ali, leader of the Left Socialist Group, was a frequent speaker on the Communists' behalf.

The Hindu Mahasabha, according to Professor Ram Singh, himself a candidate for the Assembly and President of the Delhi State Hindu Mahasabha, was not a "new-fangled organisation," but was born in the days of the Moghul Emperor, Akbar. The Mahasabha, it was claimed, had received the blessings of the great Hindi poet, Tulsidas, who had moved from Delhi to Banaras because of persecution! The main election slogan of the Mahasabha was "Akhand Bharat," (United India). But none of their speakers gave precise explanations as to how this aim was to be achieved. Professor Ram Singh said, "Akhand Bharat is our ideal, but it is preposterous to suggest that the Hindu Mahasabha wants to wage a war for a reunion of Bharat and Pakistan." In Professor Ram Singh's constituency there was noticeable some cooperation between the Hindu Mahasabha, the Akali Dal and the Jan Sangh. Master Tara Singh, leader of the Akali Dal, Shri. H. C. Chatterjee, Vice President of the Hindu Mahasabha, and Shri. Maulichandra Sharma, General Secretary of the Jan Sangh, were speakers at a joint election meeting.

Very few election meetings were held in the rural areas of the state. But the elections turned out to be much more popular in the countryside than in the urban areas. Wherever meetings were held in the rural areas, they were well-attended. Except for the Congress, no other party had any organisation to speak of in the villages. Village headmen and panchayats took active interest in shaping the direction of the vote of the villages concerned. Once a village decision was taken most of the people implemented the group choice, according to some first-hand reports from selected villages.

Apart from meetings, processions, posters and handbills, music and cinema slides also were used by contesting candidates. The K.M.P.P. distributed 15,000 balloons to children in New Delhi on New Year's day; each balloon carried the symbol of K.M.P.P. (a hut) stamped on it. An Independent candidate deluged many of his electors with New Year's cards on which was printed his own photograph. Some Congress candidates used portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr.

Rajendra Prasad, President of the Republic, to attract voters. One Congress candidate styled himself the "Servant of God." In one of his election leaflets he published a photo of Shri. Nehru on one side and one of Marshal Stalin on the other. In between the two photographs he had written his own name with the title "Servant of God." In the leaflet he had written that only Shri. Nehru and Marshal Stalin could solve the problems of the world. In another constituency, a Socialist candidate lodged a complaint with the Election Commissioner charging that religious sentiments were being exploited by the Congress Party in the Muslim-dominated sections of Delhi City. It was stated that prominent Muslim leaders, while addressing Congress election meetings, asked Muslims to vote for the Congress "since you will have to answer to Allah about it. Those who vote for the Congress will go to heaven, the others to hell."

The United Christian Association of Delhi appealed to Christian voters to support the Congress Party as, in its opinion, the Congress alone was capable of forming a stable government in the present transitional period. A washermen's organisation could not come to an agreed decision as to which party its members should support. A group of them, however, decided to support the Congress.

## ROLE OF THE PRESS

The Press, on the whole, supported the Congress Party, except for two or three Hindi and Urdu papers which supported the Jan Sangh. Because of the location in Delhi of several of the leading English dailies of India (e.g. Delhi editions of the *Statesman* and the *Times of India* plus the *Hindustan Times* and the *Delhi Express*—formerly the *Indian News Chronicle*), good coverage was given to the Delhi elections. Publicity to the programmes and propaganda of all parties was given in the press, but editorial comment generally favoured the Congress. The *Times of India* (Delhi edition) published a series of interviews with the chiefs of all major political parties concerning their politics, while the *Hindustan Times* and the *Statesman* regularly published special features

giving news of the election campaign carried on by all parties, plus the Independents. The local Press, generally speaking, was fair to all as far as coverage was concerned.

No particular effort was made by the Press to educate the voters in the techniques of the election, except for publishing certain notes circulated by the Election Commission and the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India. These official notes gave some information about the method of voting and explained some of the more important of the election rules.

One cannot say with any definiteness how influential the Press was in the Delhi elections. Since the majority of the voters were illiterate, it may be assumed that the Press influence was less powerful than it would have been in a more literate community. What is true about Delhi State would seem to apply to the country as a whole.

## POLLING

On polling day, January 14, 1952, meetings, processions and all types of public propaganda were banned by law. As a result of this, polling was peaceful and moderately quiet. Local election authorities made adequate arrangements to assure order in voting. 6,000 policemen were detailed to look after the polling booths.

A large number of refugee voters could not exercise their franchise because polling booths happened to be too far from their places of residence. At the time of enrolment of voters, these refugees were entered as voters in the constituencies in which they were then living. But before the elections arrived, many of these refugees were shifted to new colonies. As a result, the distance between the place of their residence and of their registered polling booths was in some cases as much as 10 miles. In the areas where educated middle classes predominate, the polling was rather dull.

## ELECTION RESULTS

The Congress Party secured 39 out of 48 seats for the State Assembly. The Jan Sangh suffered a severe defeat. Its

expectations were to win 15 out of 28 seats it contested. Actually it managed to secure only two seats.\* From the Sitaram Bazar constituency, dominated by Hindus and supposed to be a stronghold of the R.S.S., a Muslim (Congress) candidate won against his Hindu rival in a straight contest by over 3,000 votes. The Socialists won two out of the six seats (Assembly) that they contested, one in a predominantly Muslim area and another in a predominantly labour area. The Hindu Mahasabha secured one seat. Eighty-one Independents won only four places in the Assembly, one of them unopposed because of the rejection (on technical grounds) of the nomination papers of all other candidates. The Communists, the K.M.P.P., the Ram Rajya Parishad, the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, the R.S.P.I. and the Forward Bloc (Marxist) failed to register any victory.

The Congress Party won three out of the four seats to the House of the People. The fourth seat, for the New Delhi constituency, went to Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani of the K.M.P.P. It is interesting to note that in New Delhi, where Shrimati Kripalani defeated her Congress rival, all the state Assembly seats were won by the Congress.

A more detailed analysis of the Delhi election results reveals the extent of the impressive Congress victory. For the House of the People, the Congress polled almost 50 per cent of the votes and won three of the available four seats. The Jan Sangh, while gaining 25.92 per cent of the votes, did not win any seat because of the wide distribution of the Sangh vote through three constituencies. The K.M.P.P., on the other hand, concentrated its efforts on behalf of Shrimati Kripalani in the New Delhi constituency, winning the seat with only 7.28 per cent of the total House of the People votes in the state.

For the state Legislative Assembly, the Congress contested 47 of the 48 seats and won 39 of them (81.25% of the

\* Official statistics put Jan Sangh wins at three seats in the state Assembly. Giridhari Lal Salwan, who has been shown as a Jan Sangh nominee in the official statistics, issued a statement after the elections declaring himself an Independent and not allied to the Jan Sangh or any other party.

seats with 52.09% of the poll.) The Jan Sangh again contesting many seats (28 out of 48) did gain a number of votes (20.22% of the poll), but because of the distribution of these votes the party won only two seats (4.17% of the total). Four Independents (of 81 contesting for 37 seats) won places more by chance than by plan. The Socialists, polling only 12,396 votes (2.38% of the total) in six constituencies, were able to win two seats (4.17 of the seats) because of concentration of effort on possible winning candidates.

The weakness of the Communist Party of India and closely-allied parties in Delhi State was shown by the very small vote gained by these groups (less than 1% of the total vote), with no seats gained at all.

## ABUSES OF THE ELECTION LAW

Certain breaches of the legal provisions of the election were noticed on the day of polling. In a few cases, transport was used for carrying voters to the polls. The provision of the election law that no election poster should be displayed within an area of 100 yards of a polling booth was not observed. In the city on polling day, a number of polling booths were nearly covered by election posters of various parties and Independent candidates. In one constituency two persons were arrested for impersonating other voters. The maximum election expenditure allowed under the law was Rs. 2,000 for a state Assembly seat and Rs. 7,000 for a House of the People seat. It is an open secret that these limits on election expenditure were not observed by most candidates. Only after the Election Tribunals have sat and issued their judgements will it be possible to assess the extent of serious abuses noticed in the Delhi State election.

## EFFECT OF CASTE OR CLASS

It is difficult to estimate the influence of caste, class or other sectional antagonisms on the results of the elections. There is a conflict, difficult to identify, between refugees or governmental workers from the Punjab and the local popu-

lation of Delhi. In certain constituencies Muslim voters were in a dominating position. On the whole, Muslims voted for the Congress Party, except in one constituency where a Socialist candidate, himself a Muslim, won. The industrial workers in the city, too, except in one constituency where the Socialist labour leader, Shri. B. D. Joshi won the state Assembly seat, favoured the Congress. In the rural areas an appeal to caste prejudice was made, but its effect was negligible. With the exception of one seat, all others were captured by the Congress.

The Scheduled Castes Federation contested four of the six seats reserved for Scheduled Castes in the Delhi Assembly elections; the S.C.F. also contested for the one reserved seat for Scheduled Castes in the House of the People election in Delhi State. However, they failed to win any of these reserved seats. The Congress won five of them, with the remaining one being taken by an Independent (formerly of the Congress). The Congress also took the one reserved seat in the House of the People. The very poor showing of the S.C.F. in Delhi amongst the Scheduled Castes indicated that the Congress maintains the affection of these groups.

## CONCLUSIONS

Before the elections Delhi was regarded as a stronghold of Hindu communalism. Refugees, forming an important factor in the composition of the Delhi electorate, were thought to be opposed sharply to the Congress Party, the party which was supposed to be responsible for their plight. The election results seem to show that this section of the population by and large has favoured the Congress Party. There were exceptions, no doubt, where Independent candidates succeeded in gaining the refugee vote. But on the whole the refugees preferred the Congress to its adversaries. The Congress Party in its appeal still seems to cut across social lines. We find that Muslims, Christians, the Scheduled Castes, workers and peasants and the city's middle classes supported the "Party of the Prime Minister."

Communalism is weak as a political force, but it is not

lead. The number of votes polled by the Jan Sangh, alone, in Delhi was quite large. But the swing seems definitely against communalism.

No political party, without an adequate organisation and funds can hope to have success in Delhi State. The Congress has a suitable party machine and enjoys mass support, while other parties still depend on the individual merits and popularity of their candidates. For some time to come it seems that there will be no significant opposition to the Congress Party in this state. It is probably true that a majority of the people are not wholly satisfied with the Congress, but they do not see any other party capable of taking its place. There also is a feeling of gratitude towards the Congress for its having achieved national Independence for India. Unless the opponents of the Congress prove that they can serve the people better, they are not likely to find favour.

The elections were marked by the near-absence of local issues, except in so far as reference to internal autonomy of the state was concerned. National issues, such as communalism, the secular state, unity of the nation, nationalisation of industries, redistribution of land, a "tough policy" towards Pakistan, integrated national culture and the Hindu Raj, were the slogans and issues most commonly discussed during the election.

# 22

## HIMACHAL PRADESH

IRENE TINKER-WALKER  
*London School of Economics*

*Area: 10,451 sq. miles*

*Population: 9,83,367*

*Electorate: 5,31,018*

	House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats .. ..	3	36
Constituencies .. ..	2	28
Uncontested seats .. ..	—	2
Contesting candidates .. ..	10	133
Valid votes polled .. ..	2,23,189	1,79,783
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies ..	25.3	25

### INTRODUCTORY

Himachal Pradesh was the first state to go to the polls in the General Elections. Because of this fact, interest was aroused throughout the country about the elections in this newly-created part "C" state; the results of its elections carried considerable weight and a nationwide Congress victory was predicted by many observers. The Congress Party did win the elections in the country, perhaps for the same reasons for which the party was successful in this state: the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the party's organizational strength, and the selection of winning candidates.

### PROBLEMS OF THE STATE

On April 15th, 1948, twenty-one former princely hill



states and a few hill stations were merged into a little state whose total area is only about 10,451 square miles (the northern areas which border on Tibet remain undefined). What has been created, however, is not one state, but three: Chamba, Mandi and Mahasu-Sirmur. Chamba, the northernmost area of the state, is entirely separated from the rest of Himachal Pradesh by the 'isthmus' of Kangra, a district of East Punjab. Mandi, though contiguous to the rest of the state on the map, cannot as yet be reached directly from the capital of the state except by mule. The majority of goods and people must go by road or rail to Mandi, the long way via Pathankot in the Punjab. The lovely hill district of Mahasu also has strange boundaries because choice hill stations which were taken over from the local princes by the British have been retained by East Punjab; P.E.P.S.U., as well, has been allowed to keep areas previously belonging to the Maharaja of Patiala. The Centre made no effort to eradicate these anomalies during integration. Even Simla the capital of the state, and the only city of size in the hills, though surrounded by Himachal Pradesh has nonetheless been allowed to remain in the Punjab. This meant that the bulk of the state's employees could not vote in their own elections.

Like most of India, Himachal Pradesh suffers from widespread unemployment, a low standard of health, lack of educational facilities, and absence of roads or other channels of communication. Acute unemployment and poor health are both linked to the prevalence of venereal disease in the hills. In the areas studied by the World Health Organization or by Indian Health Officers, an average of 25 per cent of the population is shown to be affected, while in some villages the incidence is as high as 67 per cent. Because of this problem it has been difficult to find labourers who can or will undertake work on roads, though roads are the primary need in this remote and mountainous state. It is mainly the sturdy hill women who work in the fields doing farming which provides some 60 or 70 per cent of the population with its livelihood. Seed potatoes are the main crop now that opium raising has been restricted by the government. There is no pressing need for land reform since over 60 per cent of the

farmers own their own stony tracts.

Formal education was almost entirely neglected in most of the former states, though Mandi state had established a degree college. There were about 500 primary schools and 28 high schools in the area at the time of the elections. Literacy was estimated to be as low as four per cent. The result of this lack of education among residents of the state has been the large employment in the state service of persons from other states, primarily from U.P. and the Punjab. A sort of parochialism developed during the elections around the theme "Himachal for Himachalis."

Almost none of the voters had had previous experience in any sort of democratic practice. Mandi alone had held elections, and these were conducted under a limited franchise. The number of panchayats has trebled since Independence. There were only 102 of them in the 1,100 villages in the state at the time of integration; there were 316 in the autumn of 1951. Co-operative societies, though introduced into India only in 1904, have spread with amazing vigour throughout the state. Originally most societies in this area were organised primarily for marketing; with roads in such little evidence, marketing is a continuous problem for the small independent farmer. The co-operatives gained in importance when rationing was introduced since controlled articles such as food grains, salt, sugar and cloth, were generally distributed through the societies. There were already 732 societies in Himachal at the time of integration; in three years the number has jumped to 885 in a population of 9,83,367.

## THE ELECTIONS

In September 1951, the Centre decided that Himachal Pradesh and five other Part "C" states would elect members to legislative Assemblies as well as to the House of the People. This added considerably to the interest in the elections which had been scheduled to start on October 25th. Given three seats in the House of the People, one a reserved seat for the Scheduled Castes, the state was divided into two

Parliamentary constituencies: Mandi and Mahasu formed the double-member constituency; Chamba in the north and Sirmur in the south made up an undersized single constituency. This split constituency emphasized the artificiality of the state's boundaries.

Polling was held in Chini, the area of Mahasu bordering on Tibet, on October 25th and 27th in order to avoid the possibility of a snow-bound polling party. The majority of the people in Mandi-Mahasu constituency voted between November 19th and 25th at one of 170 polling booths. There were 106 polling parties, so that few of the parties had to work more than one day. But in Mandi the elections continued until the end of the month because they had only 37 polling parties to man 198 booths. The organisation of the itineraries of the parties and the transportation of the ballot boxes, ballot paper, etc., to all parts of inaccessible "tehsils" required detailed administrative planning. This aspect of the elections functioned smoothly under Capt. I. Sen, Chief Electoral Officer for the state.

On the other hand, the voter was not well prepared for polling day. Except for a few mock elections—more to give practice to the administrators than to the voters—there had been no attempt by the government to explain the process of voting to the villagers. The officials, perhaps because they were mainly "on loan" from other states, were in fear of being accused of partisan activities if they undertook any type of explanation; therefore, they remained rigidly aloof from the elections to the detriment of the electorate. Further, several officials claimed that it was the duty of the parties, not of the government, to educate the voters.

A party system hardly existed in Himachal Pradesh at the time of the elections. Even the local Congress Party—though by far the best organised—was in such a state of confusion that the All-India Congress Committee felt compelled to send out an official to see what was happening to the funds which it was supplying. This lack of organisation is easily explained. After all, Himachal Pradesh is not a pivotal state; indeed it is hardly important for anything but its timber, its seed potatoes and its climate. Before Independ-

ence none of the Punjab hill states was large enough to warrant the expenditure that would have been necessary, given the difficulties of communication in the area, to establish a strong Praja Mandal movement. Since Himachal Pradesh was established, important events elsewhere in the country had prevented any party from concentrating on organization there or anywhere else in India. What ideas of democracy or of political parties that did reach these distant, backward areas were a sort of backwash from the issues raging in the plains below. During these elections, the people of the hills for the first time were subjected to mass 'political proselytising'.

When the election dates were announced, the inexperienced state Congress was flooded with applications for party tickets. Here was an excellent opportunity for the Congress to orient itself as a party actually supporting the particular policy which the party pamphlets announced rather than to remain a movement whose *modus vivendi* had long since passed away. But the party leaders in the state did not take advantage of this. Instead there was a marked tendency for the party to pick a candidate by his chances of winning regardless of his political background. The Central Selection Committee of the Congress Party presumably was unfamiliar with local politics and had to rely upon the State Committee's advice. Thus the Congress included, among others, ex-Rajas on its list of candidates. In one area there was public reaction to this neglect of principles. The Congress withdrew its ticket from the Raja and stayed out of the contest. Still the Raja won; his headmen brought their villagers to vote.

The K.M.P.P. and the Jan Sangh seemed anxious to try their strength against the Congress. They spread themselves much too thinly by setting up two candidates each for the Parliamentary seats, and by putting up 22 and 10 candidates, respectively, for the 36 Assembly seats. The Socialists and the Scheduled Castes Federation each tried for one seat to the House of the People and were joined by the Hindu Mahasabha in contesting Assembly seats. But the organization of these parties was new and not very effective. Further, Congress had had its pick of the available candidates. The issue

of party loyalty did not really arise since there was no tradition of party politics in this area.

Further, party platforms counted for little or nothing at all in the Himachal elections. It is doubtful whether the average voter even understood what a party is or claims to be. There was, however, some association of the Congress symbol with Pandit Nehru as a result of his tour of the state. Most voters knew the name of Nehru, although many thought he was the new Governor-General and wondered just exactly why he wanted their piece of paper.

The issue which the voter did understand and which mattered the most to him concerned the building of roads. Roads would help the farmer market his crops, reduce his loss by damage in transit and increase his profits. Roads would open up areas for health treatment and education, they could give employment, they are necessary for the defence of the Indian frontier. But since every candidate promised roads, personal appeals to the voter counted heavily. It was typical of a voter to promise his vote to the first party or candidate who asked him for it. Nor would he change his mind once his promise was given, even though another candidate might impress him more. The idea of making a choice among the various candidates did not seem widely appreciated among the voters. In many villages the headmen told the villagers how they should vote. Some times the headmen decided which candidate to support by discussing him with the village elders and then insisting that the whole village follow their counsel. But all too often the headman had been briefed by the local Raja, who was very likely the candidate himself.

The number of candidates in the field and particularly their apparent similarity of qualifications and of political views tended to confuse the voter. There were 135 persons standing for the 36 seats in the Assembly and 10 for the three Parliamentary seats. Only one woman was contesting the elections: Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Minister of Health, who stood for the general seat in the House of the People from Mandi-Mahasu.

The existence of double-member constituencies, on both the state and national levels, added to the confusion. With

so many ballot boxes placed before him, it is no wonder that the illiterate and often frightened voter could not remember what he had been instructed to do. Frequently he would place his vote on the top of the box, or put both ballot papers in one box. Indeed, several candidates instructed their supporters to put both papers in their box in order to prevent the voter from inadvertently casting his second ballot paper for a rival candidate.

Nonetheless, the number of people who did understand what they were doing—however vaguely—was impressive. They realized that in some way their vote did count. Why else would everyone be wooing them? Even a twenty-eight year old woman understood that her slip of paper would help send the Raja “to see after our troubles.” She and her bent old mother had walked over two miles to vote, and both of them were carrying a pink card which bore the Raja’s symbol. The headman had given it to her so that she would remember for whom she was to vote. For a day, at least, she knew she was important. Even that is a beginning.

## ELECTION RESULTS

The results from Chini and Pangli were in before any other districts voted. The Chini seat was won by an Independent, the local Raja, on a 17 per cent total vote. The Pangli seat began the Congress landslide. The Press had stressed the first Congress-K.M.P.P. fight; there was no fight, though the K.M.P.P. candidates did poll the second largest number of votes and won three seats in the Assembly. It was the Congress’ election. They won two-thirds of the Assembly seats and all those for the House of the People after an Independent candidate allowed himself to be adopted by the party in a constituency for which the Congress nominee was rejected.

Pandit Nehru alone probably would have assured the Congress Party of victory. Further, the Congress Party did have the best organization in the state—although it was not very good. There was no need for the Congress to bury principles when selecting candidates in order to win in Hima-

chal Pradesh; it is difficult to see why they were worried at all, except that this was their first election. Indeed, the whole elective process was as educative for party leaders as it was for the electorate.

# 23

## KUTCH

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Electorate: 2,88,400*  
*Population: 5,67,606*  
*Area: 16,724 sq. miles*

			House of the People	Electoral College
Seats	..	..	2	30
Constituencies	..	..	2	30
Uncontested seats	..	..	—	2
Contesting candidates	..	..	5	68
Valid votes polled	..	..	1,19,580	1,15,412
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies	..	..	41.4	42.7

Kutch is one of the small units of the Indian Union. Situated on the West coast of India, it is mostly barren and sandy. The people of Kutch are sturdy and hard working; they speak a dialect of Gujarati.

Under the Constitution of India, Kutch has been classified as a Part "C" State. Some of the Part "C" States were given popular rule by the Government of Part "C" States Act, 1951, passed by the Parliament. But Kutch was not accorded popular rule under this Act. Kutch was to elect, under the Representation of the People Act, an Electoral College of thirty members, which in turn was to elect one member for the Council of States. The Kutch electorate was also to elect two members to the House of the People. Kutch has been ruled by the Central Government through a Chief Commissioner.



Elections were never before held in this unit of the Indian Union. In the General Elections more than 50 per cent of the population was entitled to vote. Kutch voters went to polls on 14th January, 1952. Polling concluded on the 24th of the same month.

All the constituencies for the elections to the Electoral College and the House of the People were single-member. The Congress Party was the only organised party in the state. The Socialists did some campaigning just before the elections. When the election results were announced it was found that the Congress Party had secured 28 out of 30 seats in the Electoral College and both the seats in the House of the People.

Prof. K. T. Shah, the noted Indian economist, contested a seat to the House of the People as an Independent candidate and was defeated by his Congress rival by a margin of 29,933 votes. More than 40 per cent. of the total electorate of 2,88,400 exercised their franchise. Out of the 28 Congress members of the Electoral College two were elected unopposed. The remaining two seats were secured by Independents. Socialists failed to win even a single seat. No woman contested the elections. The Electoral College elected Shri. Premji Bhawanji Thakkar, leader of the Congress Party, to the Council of States.

# 24

## MANIPUR

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 8,628 sq. miles*

*Population: 5,77,635*

*Electorate: 2,98,552*

		House of the People	Electoral College
Seats	.. ..	2	30
Constituencies	.. ..	2	30
Uncontested seats	.. ..	—	2
Contesting candidates	.. ..	14	110
Valid votes polled	.. ..	1,52,467	1,39,330
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies	.. ..	51.1	49.6

### INTRODUCTION

Manipur lies at the crossroads between India and Burma; strategically it is an important area in the Indian Union. It is classified as a Part "C" State in the Constitution of India. Before Independence, Manipur was ruled by a prince. The Government of India took over the state in October 1949, and since then it has been ruled by the Centre through a Chief Commissioner. Little more than 50 per cent of the total population consists of Manipuris (or Meiteis) who are adherents of the Vaishnava sect among Hindus; others include Nagas and Kukis who mostly live in the hills. There are no pressing problems of food, clothing or shelter. The state's economy is agricultural, and Manipur peasants produce more rice than they consume. Women weave the family's require-

ments of cloth and also produce a surplus for the market. The state does not have a problem of absentee landlordism. In a recent survey of four Manipur villages (consisting of 451 families) only one landless family was found. Nearly 84 per cent of the cultivators in the plains are owners of land and pay Rs. 9 per *pari* ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres) to the government as revenue.

Only ten per cent of the population of this state is literate. The fact that communication facilities are meagre hampers internal trade and the maintenance of law and order. There is a great disparity between the prices of local agricultural produce and imported goods. This differential is a cause of discontent among the people. The imported goods trade is in the hands of "outsiders," mostly Bengalis, and hence there is considerable "anti-outsider" feeling. The law and order problem is much less serious than in the neighbouring state of Tripura. The Communists tried to create trouble for two years, but the state government, with the help of the local population, suppressed all such efforts effectively.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

General Elections based on adult franchise were not new to the people of Manipur. Four years ago (in 1947) elections were held for the state legislature on the basis of adult franchise. The state Assembly consisted of 50 members. But not more than 30 per cent of the electorate exercised its franchise. The Congress Party emerged as the dominant party in the Assembly, but there were defections in the Congress camp. Thus the Maharaja of Manipur's younger brother, Maharajkumar Priyabrata Singh, was enabled to form the first popular Ministry with the help of the Proja Shanti Party. However, when the state was integrated into the Indian Union towards the end of 1949, the 1947 legislature was dissolved.

Out of the total population of 5,77,635 more than 50 per cent were entitled to vote in the General Elections of 1951-52. They were to elect an Electoral College of 30 members and two members to the House of the People. There were 30

single-member constituencies for elections to the Electoral College and two single-member constituencies for elections to the House of the People. One out of the two Parliamentary seats was reserved for the Scheduled Tribes.

Difficulties of communications presented a formidable problem to the state election authorities. Polling booths were provided in some cases for as few as 105 voters in order to overcome the transport difficulty. Polling commenced on January 11, 1952. Voting was peaceful and orderly. Government officers engaged in election work maintained impartiality.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The Congress Party was the strongest party in the state having been in existence for the last twenty years. Before Independence the Congress operated under the name of Manipur Mahasabha. The party did not have a widespread organisation, but was popular in the urban areas of the state. The Congress Party opposed the suggestion of Manipur's merger with Assam and demanded a popular government for the state.

The Communist Party, which had a fairly strong organisation in Manipur, was formed in September, 1948. Before that (from 1943) the party worked through the Kisan Sabha. It had considerable support in some parts of rural Manipur. The Communist Party also was opposed to the suggestion of Manipur's merger with Assam. It demanded complete regional autonomy for the state and the establishment of "People's Raj." Its other main slogan was "land to the tiller."

The Socialists were a small and youthful group. The party had an active leadership but little following and no organisation of any sort. Activities of the Socialist Party were confined mostly to small towns. The Socialists, alone amongst all the organised parties in the state, advocated the immediate merger of Manipur with Assam. They demanded redistribution of land and fixation of rent according to the productivity of land. Another major item in the Socialist Party's programme was reduction in land revenue payable to the government and rent payable in kind to the landlords.

There were in addition to these three all-India parties eleven local parties. The most important among them was the Proja Shanti Party led by the younger brother of the Maharaja of Manipur. The main slogan of this party was "Manipur for Manipuris." The party opposed the suggestion of Manipur's merger with Assam. It demanded restoration of the Maharaja as the constitutional head of the state and the establishment of popular rule in place of Chief Commissioner's rule. The party was supported in its demands by the All-Manipur National Union, another organisation supported by the former ruling family of the state. The sister of the former ruler of Manipur, Shrimati Binodini Devi, contested for the Electoral College, on behalf of the All-Manipur National Union.

Other parties, like the Kuki National Association, Manipur Zeliengrong Union, Mao Maram Union, Mizo Union and the Naga National League were confined to their respective tribes and did not have wider appeal to the people in the whole state.

Prominent among Independent candidates was the Maharani of Manipur who contested for a House of the People seat from the Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency consisting of 149,000 voters. She dissociated herself and her husband from the two princely parties, Proja Shanti and All-Manipur National Union. The common people of this state still have a great respect for their former ruler and the members of his family. Therefore, the Maharani received wide support from the people in her election campaign, particularly in the rural areas of the constituency. Her election programme was to restore the Durbar, consisting of a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly, which went out of business in October, 1949 when the state was integrated with the Indian Union. She also demanded repeal of newly-imposed taxes.

Responsible government, with an elected legislature for the state, was the main demand of all the parties except the Socialists and some of the tribal organisations who advocated the merger of the state with neighbouring Assam. The issue became particularly important because of the fact that Manipur had had some sort of popular rule before the integration of

the state. Dissolution of the elected legislature after its integration was for Manipuris a retrograde step; one which they resented. Redistribution of land and withdrawal of "outsiders" from key posts in government, trade and commerce were some of the other main issues stressed during the election campaign by the various parties and Independents.

## ELECTION RESULTS

As many as 104 candidates belonging to 14 parties and 8 Independents contested the 30 seats for the Electoral College. Two of them, one belonging to the Congress Party and the other to the All-Manipur National Union, were returned unopposed. Nearly fifty per cent of the electorate voted in the elections to the Electoral College and over fifty-one per cent voted in the elections to the House of the People. No party was able to secure an absolute majority in the Electoral College. The Congress Party contested the largest number of seats (22), but secured only 10 with 26.88 per cent of the total votes polled.

Next to the Congress in strength was the Proja Shanti Party. It contested 21 seats, but won only three, polling about 15 per cent of the votes. The All-Manipur National Union also won three out of 12 seats it contested. The Mao Maram Union, Manipur Zeliengrong Union, Kuki National Association, Achumba Pamba Congress and the Communist Party of India secured two seats each in the Electoral College. The Socialist Party, Mizo Union, Gandhi Sebok Sabha and Independents managed to get only one seat each. Naga National League, Paite National Council and the Historical Research Conference did not get a single seat.

In the elections to the Electoral College, Dr. Leiren Singh was defeated (former Public Works Minister of the state and an Independent candidate) by his rival candidate from the All-Manipur National Association viz., Shrimati Binodini Devi, sister of Manipur's former ruler.

After the elections were over, seven members of the Electoral College—two of the All-Manipur National Union, two of the Kuki National Union, two of the Mao Maram Union

and one Independent—joined the Congress Party, increasing its strength to 17 and giving it an absolute majority in the Electoral College.

In the Parliamentary elections the Congress and the Socialist Party secured the general and the reserved seat respectively. The Congress candidate who won the Inner Manipur general seat defeated his formidable rival, the Maharani of Manipur, by a large margin of votes.

## COUNCIL OF STATES ELECTION

In the Constitution of India, Manipur and Tripura together have been allotted one seat in the Council of States. The Electoral Colleges of these two states are to elect one member, turn by turn. This time it was Tripura's turn to elect a member. Manipur's Electoral College, therefore, did not elect anyone.

## CONCLUSIONS

All parties seem to be very weak in Manipur, and most people seemed to be little interested in the elections. Feudal elements do have some hold over the people, but it is not very strong as has been shown by the election results. Establishment of popular rule and more attention to the development of the state are needed. Manipur is a border state and as such it has a special significance for the whole country. Forces of lawlessness are weak. But forces of peace and stability are not strong.

# 25 TRIPURA

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 4,032 sq. miles  
Population: 6,39,029  
Electorate: 3,29,806*

			House of the People	Electoral College
<i>Seats</i>	..	..	2	30
<i>Constituencies</i>	..	..	2	30
Uncontested seats	..	..	—	6
Contesting candidates	..	..	7	71
Valid votes polled	..	..	1,57,371	1,28,652
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies			47.7	47.3

## INTRODUCTION

Tripura has a 700 mile border with East Pakistan on three sides and has no road link with Assam. Thus it is almost completely isolated from the rest of India.

Before Independence Tripura was ruled by a princely family. The state was integrated into the Indian Union towards the end of 1949, and since then has been administered by the Central Government through a Chief Commissioner. The present Chief Commissioner was a former Dewan in the state. Agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of the people. Most of the hill people are landless, the bulk of the land being parcelled out into large sectors run by relations of the state's prince. Medical facilities are meagre. Only one hospital operates in the entire state, this one situated in



Agartala, the capital of Tripura. Only about five per cent of the population of the state is literate.

Fifty per cent of the population consists of the tribes of Riangs, Chakamas, Mongs, Halams, Kukis, Manipuris, Kulis and Tripuris. However, these tribes have not been classified as Scheduled Tribes in the Constitution of India. The largest single bloc in the population of Tripura is that of 130,000 Muslims who have migrated there from Bengal. Before partition they were with the Muslim League in politics. Now most of them are pro-Communist.

The state has no communication facilities. Lack of communications has created difficulty in maintaining law and order. This is one of the main reasons for the state administration's inability to check effectively the violence engineered by the Communist Party and by anti-social elements.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

In the Constitution of India, Tripura has been classified as a Part "C" State. It does not have its own legislature. The voters of Tripura were to elect two members to the House of the People and an Electoral College of 30 members, which in turn was to elect a member to the Council of States. For 30 seats in the Electoral College there were 30 single-member constituencies. Similarly, for two seats in the House of the People there were two single-member constituencies.

Elections of any kind were unknown to the people of Tripura. The first election ever held in Tripura was that for the 18-member Agartala municipal committee. This election was held just before the General Elections of 1951-52. As many as 60 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise in this election. Polling for the General Elections commenced on January 11 and concluded on January 25, 1952. It was peaceful and orderly.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The Congress Party is the oldest party in the state, but is not the best organised. Its President and Secretary, respec-

tively, have spent 13 and 7 years of their lives in jail. The former rulers of Tripura ruthlessly suppressed the political movement and successfully kept the tribal people isolated. The Congress Party has had little contact with the general population, particularly in the rural areas. In the Agartala municipal elections the party won 11 out of the 18 seats, but its following was confined to a few small towns and did not reach out to the villages of the state. At the time of the elections the Congress Party was not united. There was a cleavage within the organisation because of changes made by the Central Parliamentary Board in the list of nominations submitted by the local Congress body. Thus the party was not ready to face the election battle with full strength and enthusiasm.

The Communist Party is the most active party in Tripura. It has tried with considerable success to repeat the Telengana experiment in this Pakistan-surrounded and roadless state. The party is particularly strong in the subdivisions of Kailashahr, Kamalpur, Khowai, Sadar, Udaipur, Sonamura, Belonia and Subroom. These together constitute an important part of the state's 4,032 square miles of territory. On the eve of the elections, the Communist Party changed its tactics from violence to a peaceful electoral front. At the time of elections one of the Communist Party's two candidates for a House of the People seat was in jail; the other was underground.

The Ganatantrik Sangh, an organisation supported by the Communist Party, was in electoral alliance with the C.P.I. The Forward Bloc (Ruikar) existed in name only. The Jan Sangh was formed just before the elections; it had no following in Tripura.

The only prominent candidate amongst the Independents was Maharajkumar Durjoya Kishore Deb Barman, uncle of the 17-year old ruler. He contested for the House of the People from Tripura West Parliamentary constituency.

## ELECTION RESULTS

Polling in Tripura was held on January 11, 16, 21 and 25. Over 47 per cent of the electorate voted in the elections to

the House of the People and the Electoral College.

The Communist Party emerged as the largest single party in the state, the only state where the C.P.I. has been able to attain that position. The party contested 16 seats for the Electoral College and won 12, two of them unopposed. The C.P.I. polled the largest number of votes, 55,333 (43.10 per cent) out of the total of 1,28,402 valid votes cast. The Ganatantrik Sangh, the C.P.I. ally, won three seats, one of them unopposed. The Congress Party contested the largest number of seats (24), but won only nine, three of them unopposed. The remaining six seats went to Independent candidates, four of whom were supported by the Communist Party.

The election in the Tripura West Parliamentary constituency was contested by candidates belonging to (1) the Congress, (2) the Jan Sangh, (3) the Communist Party and by an Independent. The Communist candidate, Shri Birendra Chandra Dutt, who was underground, defeated all his rivals by a large margin of votes. In East Tripura there was a triangular contest between a Congressman, a Communist and a Jan Sanghite. Here, also, the Communist candidate, Shri. Dasarath Deb, who was under detention, defeated his two rivals by a large margin.

## ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL OF STATES

There were two candidates for one seat in the Council of States from Tripura. The Communists (and their allies) who had secured an absolute majority in the Electoral College nominated Shri. Arman Ali Munshi as their candidate. He was elected by a majority of votes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Tripura has fewer parties than its neighbour, Manipur. This fact helped in defining issues more clearly. The Communist Party proved to be very strong and the Congress weak. Tripura is a border state. Election results in this state, therefore have a very great significance for the whole country. The poverty of the people in this small state is the main danger to peace in this region; land reform is urgently needed.

# 26

## VINDHYA PRADESH

*A Note Prepared  
by the Editors*

*Area: 23,603 sq. miles*

*Population: 35,74,690*

*Electorate: 17,60,926*

			House of the People	Legislative Assembly
Seats	..	..	6	60
Constituencies	..	..	4	48
Uncontested seats	..	..	1	1
Contesting candidates	..	..	23	252
Valid votes polled	..	..	7,05,838	6,81,799
Percentage of valid votes polled to total votes in contested constituencies	..	..	30	28.31

### INTRODUCTION

Vindhya Pradesh formerly consisted of thirty-five small states ruled by princes. After Independence, the new state of Vindhya Pradesh was created by merging these small units into one state. At first (1948) the state was classed as a Part "B" State, with the Maharaja of Rewa named as Rajpramukh, and with a caretaker Cabinet of Ministers, headed by Captain Awadhesh Pratap Singh carrying on under Congress Party direction. However, because of the many practical and political problems involved in unifying this mountainous and backward area, the Government of India, through the states ministry, dismissed both the Captain A. P. Singh Ministry and the Rajpramukh in April of 1949. Vindhya Pradesh then was reclassified as a Part "C" State to be

administered by the President of the Republic through the Central Government. Governmental functions are now channeled through a Lieutenant Governor, Shri. K. Santhanam, former Central Minister of State for Transport, who was appointed to this office on February 13, 1952.

Vindhya Pradesh is one of the most undeveloped of the Indian states in almost every respect. Only about five per cent of the total population is literate. Tribal peoples make up more than ten per cent of the population and Scheduled Castes comprise an additional 12 per cent. From its total population, an electorate of 17,60,926 persons was eligible to vote in the General Elections.

For the most part, Vindhya Pradesh is an agricultural region. One of the key agricultural problems in the state is the question of land tenure reform. The fact that a few jagirdars own about 33 per cent of the state's lands increases the significance of the land issue in local politics.

The hilly terrain makes cultivation inefficient and gives rise also to the inadequacies of internal communications. Before Independence, the many small, princely states were ruled autocratically; elections of any kind were almost unknown. The national political movement had little chance to grow under these circumstances. Congress workers did gain footholds in a few regions, but these were never powerful enough to be termed a movement. As a result, the states of V.P. remained politically uneducated.

## POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

As a Part "C" State, Vindhya Pradesh is administered by a Lieutenant Governor responsible to the Central Government and the President of the Republic. But the state is entitled to its representation in the Central Parliament (six seats in the House of the People, of which one is reserved for the Scheduled Castes and one for the Scheduled Tribes). Also, a state Legislative Assembly, with limited powers, is provided. This Assembly has a total of 60 seats, of which six are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and six for the Scheduled Tribes. The members are chosen from 48 constituencies, of which

twelve are double-member.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The difficulties facing political parties in V.P. were as great or greater than in any other part of India. Not only were certain regions difficult of access, but also much of the population exhibited little interest and no special knowledge of the function and importance of elections.

### *The Congress Party*

The Indian National Congress became active in Rewa, the present capital of Vindhya Pradesh, in 1930. The body through which the Congress operated was the States' Peoples Conference, an auxiliary of the Congress which concentrated its efforts in the princely states. The conditions under which these Congress elements worked was not conducive to widespread activity, since the Rajas were unwilling to encourage such political disruptions within their domains. However, the Congress did gain a favourable reputation for its political activities and was in a position to undertake political leadership when a merger of princely states created Vindhya Pradesh. Thus in 1948, when the caretaker Ministry was chosen, a Congress group assumed control of government.

As has been noted elsewhere, the caretaker ministry was faced with great problems at the outset of its taking office. Some Congressmen persisted in advocating the merger of V.P. with the nearby states of Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh, while other Congress groups were determined that the unity of V.P. should be preserved. Out of this conflict of views resulted a serious disturbance in February 1949, the ultimate consequence of which was the dismissal of the Congress Ministry and of the Rajpramukh by the Central Government in April, 1949 and the down-grading of the state's status to Part "C", subject to the Centre's administration and control.

Despite this indirect discrediting of the Congress Party in V.P., it continued to be respected as the leading V.P. political party by large elements of the state's population.

### *The Socialist Party*

The Socialist Party was organised in Vindhya Pradesh in 1948 after the party had split from the Congress on an all-India basis. This party had a following among the peasantry and among the tribal peoples. The Socialists gained some following by their opposing the proposals for merging V.P. into the neighbouring states of U.P. and M.P. Also, the Socialists conducted a campaign against the ejection of tenants, a movement which enlisted the support of student groups for the Socialist cause. There were predictions made, in fact, that the Socialist Party might win a majority of the Assembly seats in V.P., thus becoming the holder of power in the ministry. However, against these optimistic predictions must be noted the fact that the Socialists in V.P. were very young (all their candidates for the Assembly were less than 30 years of age) and that they had meagre financial resources. The ultimate defeat of the Socialists can be attributed partially to their youthful and unstructured organisation, as well as to a lack of party funds.

### *The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party*

The K.M.P.P. was organised in V.P. by some ex-Congressmen a few months before the General Elections; Shri. N. P. Singh was its leader. The K.M.P.P. had the support of some well-known landowners in V.P., a fact which did not raise it in the affections of the peasant electorate. However, the party had considerable funds at its disposal and the backing of some powerful landowners in addition to a moderate-sized following among the general public. The state K.M.P.P. entered into an election alliance with the Vindhya Pradesh branch of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation.

### *The Bharatiya Jan Sangh*

The Jan Sangh was organised shortly before the General Elections by some V.P. followers of the R.S.S. The Jan Sangh group in V.P. had its greatest following in the Chattarpur and Panna districts, and in isolated pockets such as Rewa where the R.S.S. had recruited a large corps of volunteer party

workers.

### *The Ram Rajya Parishad*

The R.R.P. was not a strong political force in V.P., but it did have the backing of some of the ex-rulers of the states. For example, the Raja of Kothi was one of the two candidates set up by R.R.P. for a House of the People seat. The party's strength was confined mostly to the districts of Satna and Rewa, and therein its support came mostly from the Brahman community. An attempt was made to effect an electoral alliance between the Jan Sangh and the R.R.P., but without success. Thus the two parties tended to cancel out each other's vote. Out of 17 candidates set up by the R.R.P. for the Assembly, nine were in opposition to the candidates set up by the Jan Sangh.

### *Other Parties*

The Hindu Mahasabha had never had much influence in the V.P. area. This party contested only two Assembly seats and lost both. The All-India Scheduled Castes Federation also was weak. Although there were six reserved seats for Scheduled Castes for the Assembly, the A.I.S.C.F. put up only one candidate and he lost; it also lost the one Scheduled Castes reserved seat for the House of the People. In addition to these all-India parties, two local parties (1) Kisan Sabha and (2) Sarvajanic Sabha, as well as a number of Independents took part in the election with little or no effectiveness.

## ELECTION ISSUES

There were two main election issues in V.P.: (1) the question of the future status of the state; and (2) land tenure.

The Congress and the Socialist Parties stressed the demand that V.P. be raised to the status of a Part "A" State. All the parties utilized the status issue as a means of showing local interest. On the question of land tenure, most of the parties agreed that landlordism should be abolished. The Socialist and Congress Parties, in particular, laid stress on this issue. The Socialists had made efforts to assist in rural,



tribal areas with constructive activity. By these efforts, they gained a following among some of the tribal peoples, a development which later proved to be valuable in terms of votes. The K.M.P.P. while agreeing generally with the Congress and the Socialists on the land issue, gave additional attention to provincial exclusiveness by emphasizing the necessity for keeping outsiders, e.g. national leaders of different parties, from influencing the V.P. vote. The R.R.P. and Jan Sangh gave importance in their campaigns to social issues relating to Hindu society; opposition to the Hindu Code Bill and the prohibition of cow slaughter (R.R.P.); the benefits of Hindu Raj, the Indo-Pakistan issue, Kashmir, etc. (Jan Sangh). Independents included a number of landlords, some of whom were popular with their constituents because of their having been benevolent as landowners.

## POLLING AND ELECTION RESULTS

About thirty per cent of the total electorate went to the polls on election day, a fair number considering the difficulties of voting in some of the more remote, mountainous areas in the state. The voters were confronted with a large number of contestants: 253 candidates (from nine parties), including 41 Independents, contested for 60 seats in the Legislative Assembly; 24 candidates representing six parties and four Independents, contested for five seats in the House of the People. The sixth House of the People seat, reserved for 200,000 tribal voters, was won by the K.M.P.P. candidates without opposition.

The Congress Party won 40 out of the 60 seats for the Assembly and four out of the six seats for the House of the People. This decisive victory was achieved on the basis of 33.9 per cent of the votes for the House of the People election, and 38.5 per cent of the votes for the state Legislative Assembly. The Socialist Party had hoped to win majority control of the Assembly in V.P., but it won only 11 seats in the Assembly and one in the House of the People. Socialists polled 18.66 per cent of the votes in the Assembly election and 14.9 per cent of the votes in the House of the

People election. The K.M.P.P. won three seats (with 16 per cent of the votes) in the Assembly and one in the House of the People (without opposition). The R.R.P. and Jan Sangh won two seats each in the Assembly out of the 17 and 34 candidates respectively set up by each to fight the elections. Although 41 Independents contested 26 seats, only two Independents won Assembly places. The other parties contesting won no seats at all.

## COMMENT

Field reports indicate that voting in V.P. was conducted largely on caste lines, with the R.R.P. getting support from the Brahmans, the K.M.P.P. being supported by the Kshatriya and Rajput communities and the Congress and the Socialists gaining from the large non-Brahman group and from Tribal and Scheduled Caste communities. Personalities and personal influence played a very important role in this backward state.

The Congress was greatly assisted in its success by a splitting of the vote, particularly between the Socialists and K.M.P.P. In several constituencies, e.g. Gurti and Raipur, the combined vote of the Socialists and K.M.P.P. more than equalled the Congress vote. But since the Socialists and K.M.P.P. had been unable to effect an election alliance, the Congress benefited from the split vote. The R.R.P. and Jan Sangh also lost possible seats because of their inability to arrange an alliance.

## WOMEN CANDIDATES

One woman candidate for the House of the People was put up by the Socialist Party, but she lost to her Congress rival. Out of the three women candidates who contested for the state Legislative Assembly, one Shrimati Sumitri Devi, a Socialist, was returned to one of the six seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes.

# APPENDIX

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Uncontested Elections

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